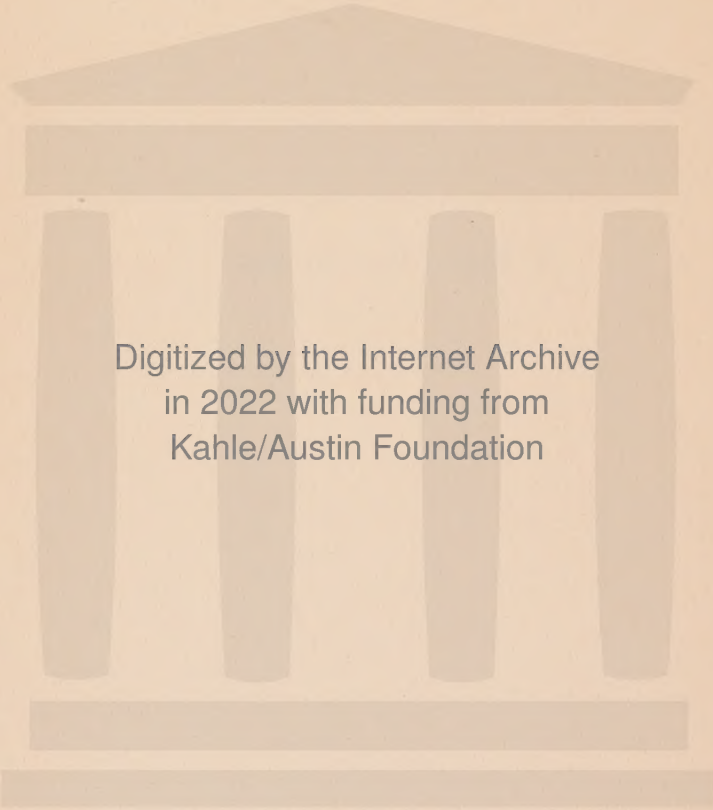


I Have This to Say



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I HAVE THIS TO SAY:

*The Story of
My Flurried Years*

By
VIOLET HUNT

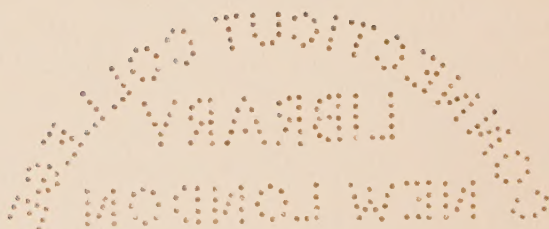


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FOREWORD

When I was a little girl John Ruskin took me for a long walk in the nut woods at Brantwood and, in reply to one of the heart-searching, anticipatory questions of girlhood—questions that can on no account be put to one's parents but only to one's chosen mentor as this man was to me and many other children—he told me simply—simply, earnestly, as if one was grown up though one was only eleven and that was why one loved him;—

“Find someone you can love and trust and then count no sacrifice too great to make in that one's service.”

And trust!

Yes, leave it at that and life is very simple. You have just got to choose à *quelle sauce* you will be devoured. Choose your mentor, your friend, your betrayer, carefully and *pour ses beaux yeux* or his facile tongue. That makes it easier to suffer, and be sure you will in the end.

There are some things no one tells—some things no woman tells—and some things I may not tell but that I am going to tell as far as is permissible. I will speak the truth and nothing but the truth but indeed, to vouchsafe the whole truth at this juncture would, I am told, land me in prison for three months without the option of a fine.

Yes, I know they are puzzling, my great white silences, and that there are the absurdest lacunas in my narration of the things that impressed me, the things that depressed me as they fell in the course of the flurried years 1908 to 1914. I am aware that there *are* the most distracting contradictions here and there and that “in many places the text, as it stands, *is* confusing.” I am aware that “the lawsuits are *not* lucidly explained” and that “conditions that led to certain legal situations are *not* clear without such explanation.” But, sadly as it happens, for me to explain is death and I should like to live to fight—and write—another day. So, distastefully enough, I hedge myself behind a warding sentence and tell you

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that these lacunas I may not fill, these texts I cannot remodel to the heart's desire, these explanations are not now forthcoming lest it should be said I am representing myself to be what I then considered I was in law—his wife. I have been rudely taught since that it was not so—that I never did become a legal wife. And leave it at that, and the whole truth at the bottom of the well at Selsey where it may appropriately lie until the Peninsula is all at sea. The immediately curious can refer to the appendices at the end of this volume. The reports which the Editor of *The Times* has given me permission to reproduce, taken with my account, discrepancies and all, may enlighten them a little.

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PART I

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LIFE is a succession of affairs, but there is always one affair for which the years, from birth, are a preparation, a hardening, a tempering, and a more or less serious erosion, possibly, of the sword of the fighter. And there comes, sooner or later, according to the sets and the entries and exits of the other actors, one's own supreme moment. One is on. And that entry, being but human, one may so easily muff. That moment, some will say, I did muff.

Not, said a soldier to me, walking along the pier at Redcar in the days of the bitterness of the war—when words flowed from the mouths of deeply tried men, ebullitions of a deep and desperate cynicism that seemed to sour the sunlight—not, said he, till a person comes to lie on his deathbed and is faced with that five minutes' unrolling of the Book of Judgment—that feverish access of memory, including full clarity of vision, of which all who have been brought back from the gates of death have spoken and written—does a person know which is *the* affair of all. And not even then, perhaps, with which of the three prime passions that moment would come to be concerned—affair of the heart?—affair of ambition?—

affair of revenge?—these simple emotions that sway us indifferently still. Though nowadays Love stalks kingly in the forefront of motive, Elizabethan men were not ashamed to put either of the others first. Even Othello's great love was compound of the ambition to be master in his own house and husband of his own wife.

"One word is too often profaned——" So often that I will not. And because I think Love, in my exquisite sense, is too beautiful and too rare. Once in a blue moon! The blossoming of an aloe! I confess I should like to see the word and the particular emotion it describes, relegated to the categories of abnormality—used to signify some monstrous spiritual growth. For me the propaganda which makes the world go round—not on—is liking, not love, liking with a little "I," not Love with a big one, jogging it all the time so as to carry on in a desultory manner the uncalled-for curse of existence by a series of small shocks—as one might say the progression of a motor-car. And what is Passion but a dangerous kind of cargo that one takes on board, contraband more often than not, and of absorbing interest to the mechanic since it implies danger, stress, and effort, and entails pains and penalties which may make a continuance of the journey impossible.

The car run in the name of Love may be a good starter, and there is always the chance that it may subside into efficient and decorous easy-going, and so fare on to the terminus, delivering its crew in very nearly as good condition as that in which they set out. Yet no man "magnanimous and tender," no woman "passionate and true"—I quote the great male summing up of these special sex characteristics perpetrated by F. M. W. Myers in his *Poems long ago*—would venture to talk of Love in connection with its progress. But I think that the expression Miss Austen uses to describe the strongest emotion of which her worthier characters are capable—Marianne Dashwood is out of court—might be used to denote the slab-compound of sentiments and feelings that enables a husband and wife to get on after several years of union—Attachment.

"Love me little—love me long," is the proverb invented for careful starters in matrimony, or the railwayman's "White for right, and red for wrong, and green for gently go along."

Love me little—that is, like me a great deal; and liking *can* last. Of course there are “Moments struck from midnights!” as the sober, burgomaster Browning says, but the continuous cinematograph ends certainly in boredom, and may end in tragedy. As Browning, too, said of Professor Milsand of Avignon—a dull darling—I knew him.

I have a friend over the sea.
I like him, but he loves me.

Half a tragedy, at any rate, there! Poor little Milsand was devoted. He was invited to stay every year, but he was not happy. And then we have Swinburne’s many loves that are good to see—very good to see if the avoidance of stress is any object. For one love is the devil since it implies the obstination of sex. The love-liking is, can be, everywhere; love of lovers—of parents—of brothers—of friends. And, partaking of our animal nature, most surely combined with neglect and cruelty. Each man and woman, too, is apt to kill the thing he or she loves, and, being human, does not turn a hair but being, peradventure, an author, writes about it.

Joseph Conrad, dealing masterly with these shifting values, of which he was quietly cognisant, would seem in his books to have selected one virtue for a master key to open all locks in the House of emotional conjecture. He chose that his world should rest on Fidelity. His Love was a concentration on one particular object, of steadfastness, honour, courage, pity, and generosity; “Old abstractions,” Mr. Squire says, “to which he held firm.” With Conrad it represented a crime for a man to question courage and honour, to stifle decent traditions and conscience. Splendid, useless fidelity, like that of the dog watching by its master’s body, licking the hand that will never stroke it again, perhaps never did, perhaps struck it instead of caressing it. Or the silly boy on the burning deck, with whose story our romantic yet common-sensible childhood was fed. But when you get older you find you can’t better it. When nothing holds, when the very scaffolding of one’s ideals, honour, love, and the rest totters and crumbles, some absurd fetish of endurance, some catchword, like the noble slogan of the Grants

going into battle and shouting to the hills that look down on them: "Stand fast, Craig ellachie!" must serve our turn and steady our nerves. We don't fight for King Charlie, but we go—or don't go—on, bearing the world's annoy "with a sigh that is not quite a sob, a smile that is not a grin."

Of once sown seed, who knoweth what the crop is?
Alas, my love, Love's eyes are very blind.
What would they have us do? Sunflowers and poppies
Stoop to the wind.

So sang, artlessly, for he was only nineteen, Oliver Madox Brown, who died so young and broke the heart of his father. One does not know what he would have done when his time came? Bowed to the wind perhaps—adopted the *laissez faire* attitude of the artist like others of his race.

But one thing is certain, artist or no, man and woman always, the crop belongs equally to the associate sowers who have devoted their patch to the raising of it. Conrad's deification of the sense of responsibility in emotional affairs is to me the high-water mark of civilisation. Wilde, of course, put the case for crude animalism. *Not* to kill "the thing he loves," according to the dictates of the sadic brute that, willy-nilly, does reside in Man, but to cherish it, maybe in boredom, is the real crux of decency—to dig one's emotional crop in the sweat of one's brow; with conscientiousness to reap the harvest of tares—or even of dragon's teeth.

I remember Oscar, before America, when he was really still a slightly stuttering, slightly lisping, long-limbed boy, sitting in the big arm-chair at Tor Villa, where we lived then, lounging fatuously, tossing the long black lock on his forehead that America swept away, and talking—talking—happening to talk about maps and other things. We did—father, mother, Oscar and I—talk of anything we could any of us lay a hand to; and this Sunday evening it was maps—the maps of the Ancients that he had been seeing: Africa.

"Oh, Miss Violet," he exclaimed, drawing his breath through his teeth in a sibilant whisper of intense appreciation, "think of a map drawn of a whole continent, and beside the names of an

insignificant city or two three words: *Hic sunt leones!* Oh, Miss Violet, let you and me go there."

"And get eaten by lions?" said I.

Well, we did. I did. To Germany. And, one way and another, I seem to have fought with wild beasts all my life.

I have been called a sparrow; but I think I am much more like a robin—Heaven's Litigant, Blake calls him. I have always been up against something—wanting to alter something—fighting something. I do not invite contest exactly; it comes to me. When I was a child in a perambulator the well of it was always full of petitions against some abuse or other—the draining of Thirlmere Lake; the building over of the New Forest; and, of course, the early suffrage movement championed by Miss Lydia Becker—which my mother was sedulously sending round to one or other of her influential friends, Robert Browning, John Millais, or Edward Jones (as he was then) for signature. Oh, how cross Mr. Jones was at being disturbed! For he opened the door himself, and glared with his mild blue eyes at the German nurse who proffered the petition. He would sit at ladies' feet, kiss their pale hands, but not those of women who voted, so he told her.

When I grew up I threw myself anew into the Suffrage movement, and should certainly have done my three months in the second division if it had not been for the provisions I made for the care, delegated to me, of an invalid mother and a young niece. Mrs. Pankhurst and Christabel kindly dispensed with my services *in extremis*. So my nose remains in its own shape, not squashed against the flank of a horse—voted by Miss Evelyn Sharp as the safest place of all when the mounted police were turned out to disperse us—or torn in the efforts of the doctors to forcibly feed us. In the eighties I was sent to Paris, on the advice of a good friend of my mother, Mr. Crackanthorpe, to avoid the possibility of being dragged ever so slightly into a divorce case, a prime disaster for an unmarried girl in those Victorian days.

So, one way or another, since I have grown to woman's estate, I have been up against it—the Law, I mean. I can scarcely count my appearances in those grim halls before the blind Master in

Lunacy, encounters with what is worse than an enemy you cannot see and that is an enemy who cannot see *you*, resisting, for my mother and for pride's sake, the efforts of aunt and sister to remove her from my care. And when the fighting was all done in 1916 it was mine to attend once a week with the accounts that I, in the intervals of writing books and attending to social duties, had got ready for the Official Receiver, whom I was "under."

Sitting on the edge of a chair, frightened out of my life by the horrid implications of my "fiduciary position" and this gloomy place, I would go through them with a handsome young deputy of this important functionary, with whom I had danced and might again. While he was scrutinising them my eyes would rest on the sill—used as a bookcase—of a window, cut in half to light another room. In windows of this kind this exceedingly ill-designed palace of justice abounds. It looks one thing from the outside and another from the inside—an apt description of the law, I think. And I would observe a copy of my latest book, and wonder what they had got it there for? Anything I wrote could be carped at, might contain grounds for "Actions." Then the young man would say politely: "This item—eleven shillings for parrot seed—seems excessive?" And I would reply in penitence: "Eleven *pence*. I am sorry I write so badly."

Like Miss Flite, I have haunted for years the law courts of this as well as those of other countries. But, unlike Miss Flite, who was always "expecting a decision shortly," and never got it, I have been favoured with some very disagreeable ones *prestissimo*. I have had the honour of bowing my head, with a large and fashionable hat on it, quite a number of times to its decrees, in fact and in theory. My head, with or without the hat, is not, though bowed, "bloody," to quote the poet Henley's touching vaunt. I have got lots of copy, and I daresay I am a good deal better off than Miss Flite, but indeed, *je ne demande pas mieux* than never to see those grey stones again.

And I am sure I shall. For I am credulous, a non-sifter of evidence, hasty, liking to scorch through to my end, and, withal, egregiously, incredibly, sincere. Blatant sincerity like mine always gets one suspected: it is so much too good to be true.

And, as a literary woman, my years of mark and usefulness coincided with a great literary launch, that of the "greatest Review in the world." This was in 1908, that began with such high hopes, both personal and literary, and ended with the loss of the ship—several ships, indeed, as full of precious and important merchandise as those of the Merchant of Venice, for which the lady of Belmont so sweetly indemnified him—and the downing of a genius; surely the greatest crime that can be committed by mediocrities who ought to know their places better and refuse to help to pull down those who are doing a portion of the world's work. To thwart such a one is, to my mind, a sin against light.

I am one of those who believe that genius, of its nature, is a state permanently bordering on frenzy, a beatitude which entails certain pains and penalties that no one else can shoulder, and some others which can generally be delegated to disciples. Every genius should have, must have, disciples.

The mechanism of genius is entirely different from that of those who are expecting to benefit from its ministrations. Genius must live; the engine must be stoked. Once when Mr. Yeats and I were sitting in the stalls at a suffrage matinée, listening to a very wonderful and fat tenor singing lustily for the Cause, the poet remarked: "It's a pity this kind of locomotive has to wear its tender *in front!*"

Another author, Mr. W. L. George, made a still more cynical appraisal of a brother novelist: "He's just a stomach with a brain on top." It seems to be generally admitted that Genius is incapable of bearing, should not be called upon to bear, all its own burdens; its back is not broad enough, or it bends and lets trouble go over it. What can it do but, like sunflowers and poppies, stoop to the wind.

Well, well! What was done was done, and each bears from thence onwards his own burden. Genius could not be protected, although I tried, my self-imposed duties including even the prevention of attempted suicide, which, in those days, I conceived of as a mistake.

The year 1908 was the year of the Sicilian Players, of the life-struggle for the Vote, of my old friend Somerset Maugham's great dramatic break, beginning with *Lady Frederick*, down to *Caroline* in 1926, of John Galsworthy's pet slum-child singers of ballads at

the Esperance Club. I had published my best novel, and Ford Madox Hueffer the third volume of his historical trilogy, *The Fifth Queen Crowned*.

Old Ford Madox Brown, his painter grandfather, was my father's intimate friend, while the wonderful boy, his uncle, who wrote the lyric I have quoted, sat at the feet of my mother. I used to go to Pre-Raphaelite children's parties at the Seddons' and Tebbs' to help, and often had to rap the fingers of the two high-spirited Hueffer boys for playing ball with the penny buns; and, owing to my Corsican governesses, I was able to give his father, the musical critic of *The Times* and introducer of Wagner into this country, some notes about Corsica for the libretto of *Colomba*.

When next I met the wild, aggressive boy of the children's parties who took to literature at sixteen and published *The Brown Owl*, he was a man grown, married, and with two children, to whom he wrote lovely poems. It was at a dinner at John Galsworthy's. I will not describe him. It is difficult for me. And even then, although we walked home together along the Kensington Road, talking of Pre-Raphaelitism and the price of copper, I did not see him again for a year. Then suddenly I was pitchforked by the kind offices of a friend into his office and his great venture of the *English Review*, which all that hot summer was simmering in the minds of its promoters, Hueffer, Marwood, Conrad, and Wells, busily collecting artists to write and men of good will to read what they had written, arranging its lovely format and type, and not neglecting the sweet uses of advertisement.

My literary agent at that time was the late J. B. Pinker, prince of agents, kindest friend to his clients and a great rider to hounds. I have sat with him in his office and observed the back of his head green with some nasty fall he had had. "Jy B" I had known as a boy in the office of *Black and White*, and he and I used to race to get the foreign stamps out of the editor's wastepaper basket for our collections. Early in this fateful year I sent "Jy B" three stories to place, which he had returned, saying that he could do nothing with them. They have had a lot done with them since. In despair I wrote to Mr. Wells, asking him if he could tell me where to send them. He answered, on a speaking postcard: "Send them to the

English Review. It's *It* this year!" Of course *Tono Bungay* was booked to come out in it.

Although I had known the editor of the *Review* since childhood, I had become rather a stranger to him, so I begged H. G. to write to him and introduce me as a wishful contributor. Then I got another postcard: "He knows you quite well, he says; and will you take them to the office, 84 Holland Park Avenue?"

The editor lived in his office, and the office was a maisonette over a poulterer's and fishmonger's combined, in the long road that leads to Oxford, bordered by nice tall trees now, planted when I was a little girl going daily past the shop on my way to school, the first of the kind planned by Lady Stanley of Alderley, Miss Russell Gurney, and all sorts of big-wigs, for the amalgamation in infancy of the classes and the masses. Miss Mash, the greengrocer's daughter, and Miss Agnes Lane Fox, now Lady Grove, sat on either side of me. Miss Margaret Burne-Jones and Miss May Morris held honoured places in the school. We did amalgamate, all of us, very nicely, playing in the yard with a large football presented by the foundress, and quarrelling as much as was necessary for complete fellowship.

There was a chaste brown door—the side door of the shop originally—with a gilt plaque, ENGLISH REVIEW, LTD., just over the bell. There was no need of a bell, for, from the date of the installation of the *Review*, this, the editor's house and home, was left permanently open to all and sundry, contributors, burglars, and political refugees. Vera F——, the woman who shot at Stolypin, found an asylum here in 1908. An English burglar contrived, one summer afternoon, to steal all the editor's spare tall hats, while Azef, the Russian spy, so he informed me, was in the habit of coming in and ransacking the editor's desk. Altogether, 84 Holland Park Avenue seemed to be a mark for all sorts of Communist, Bolshevik attempts, a regular danger-spot. On the pavement outside a man had been sandbagged and left for dead; and Mr. Chandler, the poulterer, his landlord, and a big, hefty man carried his own takings to the bank every day, but went continually in fear of a knife in his back. The editor rather liked it.

Nothing more terrible than the sickly, depraved smell of chick-

ens assailed me as, opening the door, I walked upstairs past the shop premises to the first floor, where the editorial department was. Pre-Raphaelite engravings, portraits of the editor's aunt, Christina Rossetti, and his grandmother, Mrs. Ford Madox Brown, photographs, Mr. Rothenstein's portraits of Conrad and of other well-known people—lined the stairs. The open door of a bathroom yawned halfway up, and then there was a broad landing, ending in a permanently open door which banged intermittently. The editor's nerves luckily were not that kind. Anyone could have invaded his hearth and home at any time. It was emphatically *not* an Englishman's castle, in any sense of the word, and he wore both his literary heart and his valuable time on his sleeve.

The editorial department occupied the whole first floor; walls had been knocked into each other and formed a large room, with three windows on the front and one on the back looking on to Mr. Chandler's rubbish yard. This room, full of corners and queernesses, I was to know very well afterwards. Upstairs there was a kitchen and a dining-room and two small bedrooms, one little more than a cupboard.

The staircase leading up there was obviously rickety, but I did not go up that day. Invitations to the editor's famous little home-cooked dinners came later.

The editor, wearing a brown velvet coat that had belonged to Rossetti, came forward, and a lovely, golden-haired girl whom he introduced as Hermosa. She was going to be secretary to the Review, and was making tea. I was shy; I always am of editors, because they are so powerful. I noticed some beautiful furniture, but very little of it. A large Broadwood piano filled up one corner, and there was a Chippendale bureau on which, the editor said, Christina Rossetti had written her poems. There was a cabinet that he said had belonged to the Duke of Medina-Sidonia, that he had picked up for a song. It was crammed with manuscripts, rammed in anyhow, bulging, sagging, sprouting out of the beautiful incrustated doors, and was in a shocking state. After tea, and not till then, the editor took my manuscripts all together between his two hands, and, opening and shutting them, flirted the pages. . . . There were three long-short stories. . . .

He said suddenly, pausing at the middle one: "I'll take this."

I said, "But you haven't read it!"

He had chosen "The Coach," rather a nice tale of the uneasy, which I had written wandering along the shores of the Cromarty Firth when I was staying at Invergordon with the Monds.

They took some princely, ducal or seigniorial mansion every summer and invited me to stay with them, which I was delighted to do. This year it was the ancestral castle of Macleod of Cadboll, a name well known in Highland story. I heard what they paid for it—something phenomenal. They took it complete; family portraits, ghosts and ancestral piper attached. Thus they were let in for the tenants' ball, a responsibility they shouldered magnificently, Sir Alfred leading out the cook and Lady Mond undertaking the butler. But the piper would not come to the party because his wife did not approve of his admiration for Miss Eva, as like a snowflake as her mother; the whitest woman I ever saw. The piper, too, was exceedingly handsome in his way and knew his job. He carried on just as if his own master was in residence. At dawn he piped three times around the house outside, miscellaneous shriekings which we understood to be pibrochs;—"Pibroch of Donuil Dhu—Pibroch of Donuil . . ." Again at night, when we had come to the dessert, he marched and piped three times round the dining-room table: some of the guests, embarrassed by this so foreign ceremonial, adopted *faute de mieux* a half attitude of prayer and stooped politely over their plates like week-end guests in a pious house roped in to attend church on a Sunday morning.

Pibrochs we called them but later Macalister confided to me that he gave them "joost anything"—funeral marches sometimes, for the lovely hostess and her Semitic friends "wouldna ken the differ."

And to keep us amused and good tempered in the daytime there were two pursuits; one as old as the hills, the other comparatively new—golf and motoring. I did neither. The first I could not, the other I was afraid to—yes, positively afraid. There were so many accidents at first. And, even here, the motor part used to run over a sheep or so most days on their way to the links and the

hapless millionaire was charged six pounds a head. And didn't even get the sheep!

I used to take long walks along the shores of the Firth and look for the British Fleet which was not in sight but was supposed to be anchored there, and compose sad stories in my morbid mind. And one—a particular child of loneliness and *désœuvrement*, "The Coach," is the best story I ever wrote and represents my first contribution to *The English Review*, written when I was a guest of the man, all unwitting, who ultimately took it over.

Three days later I lunched with him and Hermosa and Stephen Reynolds—his partner, secretary, I know not what—in the back room of the pastrycook's next door, for the editor kept no servants. Mrs. Miller, a nice old thing who was kitchenmaid to the Benckendorfs at the Russian Embassy, came in every morning for an hour or two. She used to fill a coal-scuttle timed to last the day, and if the editor wanted any more he had to fill it himself from the coal-cellar at the bottom of the garden, which grew nothing but empty packing-cases and reams of discarded packing paper, and—the moment the Review was really started—priceless manuscripts that the rabbits of Mr. Chandler browsed upon. I do not know who did the sweeping, but I suspect that Hermosa, the dainty presiding goddess, saw to it that the room was dusted and the curtains fresh. She was beautiful and austere, kind and cold—an admirable secretary for a literary man to have. She put the papers back, answered the letters, and generally tried to keep the review and its editor straight.

Then I was made to work, to assist at the terrific catering for the Review's prestige and opening number. Manuscripts began to come in. Thomas Hardy's "Sunday Morning's Tragedy" came in in August; and there were all sorts of fusses about foreign contributors.

I left London at my invalid mother's wish, and took her to the sea. Being modern Englishwomen full of customary observances, it was considered impossible that she or I should stay in town in August out of the season. We went down to Bournemouth, to the house of the son of an old friend, Kegan Paul, the publisher. Dan Leno was there, very ill, imagining that he was the tall clock in

the hall that ran up and down once a day, the one borderland patient allowed, patient and inoffensive. Leaving my mother there in Dr. Paul's care, I took a holiday for a month. My nicest visits, on her account, could never last longer.

Since Wireless—wonderful Wireless—I have come to believe that some sort of receiving station can be set up under conditions of intense human sympathy, of which neither the sender nor the recipient of messages sent is necessarily cognisant, and I always have remembered a song that Olga Lynn, when I was staying with the Brunners—my summers in those days were spent with Monds and Brunners—at Torphins, used to sing to us by request out of *La Périchole*:

Tu n'es pas beau, tu n'es pas riche,
Tu n'as même pas d'esprit,
Et, pourtant, brigand, je t'adore. . . .

Several times in my life I have received such apparently and obviously purposeless messages. Once I dreamed that Rennell Rodd, a dancing partner of my youth, was very ill somewhere and calling me by name. I woke and told my sister. Since then, reading the memoirs of Walburga, Lady Paget, I find that he was lying seriously ill in Zanzibar that very day. I can only suppose that I caught his desperate wireless intended for someone else. And I have received two calls distinctly intended for me, addressed to me, I think with intention by a human being in distress.

This first time was when I was in my apogee, fairly young, healthy, contented, happy and gay, living in a delicious, delirious haze of blue and gold in a castle by the sea. The Monds had rented, at my suggestion, Joyous Gard that year. And on the russet rock of Bamborough, with the azure sky and sea all round, in that wonderful autumn of 1908, a sort of summons from a desperate human heart came to me where, in this palace which Lord Armstrong had evolved out of the ruins of a mediæval castle, I was living on the fat—on the richness—of the land, listening to the strains of Norah Clench's violin and Connie Goetze's soothing playing, sitting to Sigismund in the old chapel, motoring into Scotland in a Rolls-Royce, bathing from the golden sands by day, and

dancing by night in the hall with a *sémillant* German professor from Wurzburg who had married his English girl pupil. It is a way German professors have. In the rests I looked down from the window to see the white foxes—the vicar had told us of them—playing on the yellow beach blanched by moonlight.

And I was reminded of the editor, sitting patient and forlorn in the swelter of London on his nest-egg of the *English Review*. There was much that was German in the air to remind me of him. Carlyon Bellairs, the Member for Lynn, was terrorising us with the German menace, distributing frightening leaflets, dinging into our ears his projects for the expansion of the Navy, trying to get signatures to a petition. . . . Taking me to an east window, he would say in a fine, conspiratorial voice, "Look there! Straight across. There lie Cuxhaven and the Kiel Canal, exactly opposite us, and England prone—practically defenceless!"

It *was* terrifying. There is along that coast a chain of high basaltic rock crowned with castles all the way to Scotland, but there are, in between, bights and bays and even sands suitable for landing. But the Brunners and the Monds did not much seem to want to contribute to an increase of English ships, for there was "no danger of a war"—"too many commercial interests involved on both sides. . . ." *Bona fide* they assured me of this, and thought no evil, poor dears!

The German professor held his peace on these large issues and talked to me on the Swinburne poems he was slowly and strenuously translating, and I could not help thinking of the lonely editor stewing at his desk in the fetid airs of the poulterer's shop, spending his evenings in the Shepherd's Bush Empire near by, with a sheaf of manuscripts to read in the waits so as to avoid looking at the advertisement curtain; turning out for air into the squalid passage alongside, and in again. Both Mr. Goldring and Mrs. Conrad have described his stormy mode of editing *con amore*.

Yes, he was drawing me. I felt I must do something. Go home or write? I had been far too happy to write letters, but I pulled myself together and did so—a letter containing vague messages of sympathy, as of an angel stopping from heaven to a mor-

tal in durance. And I got an answer in the editor's own special mode. Yes, everything was beastly, but he was plugging away. No, he had been there all the time. When was I coming back to help with the review? God was not Good. Yet he prayed Him to bless me. His writer's cramp was so bad that he could not write more.

While I was there I succeeded in buying, at auction, the house on Campden Hill which my mother leased, and got one of the Monds to be surety for the purchase-money. Thenceforward my invalid mother became my tenant and paid her rent to me—an impossible relation, as I found it when she came to die, for the other beneficiaries under her will could not be brought to see that as landlord I was entitled to claim reparations of the outgoing tenant, like any other landlord.

It was all dragon's teeth that I was sowing that year, and I should have left the salvation of F. M. H. alone, for that, also, became an impossible relation. The male must not depend on the female, even in business; but if love comes in the situation becomes more than impossible. F. M. H. would have done very well without me; perhaps better, as I have come to see now.

But the octopus tentacle of the need of the artist-egotist for an Egeria—any number of Egerias—won. I am cynical, and I do think there was something of the literary octopus in the drawing, insinuating pressure of his desire, flung greedily in my direction. An editor in quest of assistants is like a mother at a registry office, straining every nerve to get a good nurse for her new-born child that is to knock the world. The review was everything to him, and I could jolly well help him with that! A woman at a loose end of life, with a visiting list of notabilities as long as your arm and some experience of literature, and especially of the genus review! I had had a good deal to do with certain Argonautical expeditions that never attained the Golden Fleece, but were, all the same, great and instructive adventures in many ways.

There was *Chapman's Magazine*—a well-filled graveyard full of the best short stories. And there was *Black and White*, on which I spent the best blood of my girlhood. That was, perhaps, frankly commercial. But the *English Review* was of the nature

of a dynastic venture, a Forlorn Hope led for the supremacy of the Kingdom of Literature gone derelict, and the crown tossing about somewhere in Fleet Street for him who would to take it. A Jacobite laird, turning out with his clansmen, could not have spoken of the object of the fight more earnestly and solemnly than did Joseph Conrad. One should have heard him when the principles, the abstract moralities of journalism were *en jeu*! Was it a question of coalition with America, one of the gorgeous establishments of organised mass literature that nibbled at the little, plain, sober, high-souled Review with a view to the absorption of good brain and blood to feed the popular Minotaur? An attack by some literary *faiseur*, some editor-publisher of a lower literary morality? This would only mean, Conrad would say, the debasing of those ideals which the editor's own published declaration had set forth, embodied in the sweet and fatuous circular which the Junta had drawn up, and which was to guide the editorship of the Review.

"The only qualification for admission to the pages of the Review will be—in the view of the Editors—either distinction of individuality or force of conviction, either literary gifts or earnestness of purpose, whatever the purpose may be—the criterion of inclusion being the clarity of diction, the force or the illuminative value of the views expressed. What will be avoided will be superficiality of the specially modern kind which is the inevitable consequence when nothing but brevity of statement is aimed at. The *English Review* will treat its readers, not as spoiled children who must be amused by a variety of games, but with the respectful consideration due to grown-up minds whose leisure can be interested by something else than the crispness and glitter of a popular statement."

The Editors! Indeed, it is not difficult to discover the concoctors of this gallant, grandiloquent manifesto. I see one of the co-authors of *Romance*—his guiding pen in every line—and this manifesto for a time was lived up to. No paltering with noble ideals—high and irreconcilable with popularity, unfortunately. No popular concessions! Even the rumour of such a thing in Lon-

don would be, Conrad said, "like a hint of failure," and "the Review may have to stop, but it must not fail." Brave words, weren't they? And it was mine to hear them! And my own timbers, deeply saturated with mean journalistic experience, shivered. The ship of the Argonauts—the good magazine that lives and remains good—had yet to be built. But, anyway, to the starters, the backers, the lenders of time and money and credit, and to the mariners that sail her, the glory and the odd hits! "*C'est bien assez*," Conrad said.

The first number of the Review was conceived at Conrad's place in Leicestershire, where they make the bonnets. And as the wife of the bosom who always bears the brunt, remarks (in the public press) "no birth could have been more painful or more expensive in the matter of food and light and output of nervous energy."

Whose energy? And what would the lady have? One cannot make revolutions with rosewater or omelettes without breaking harmless necessary eggs—or hearts. And while men work and put together masterpieces their women must grieve and keep the house going whose roof shelters these workers. As the hour approaches, December, 1909, Conrad writes to Joseph Leopold from Someries—I have his letter—"Do come, and bring your secretary." For whom, if I know them, there would certainly not be a room even if there was room! . . . So, "like a mediæval baron," Joseph Leopold arrives, travelling with his retinue, his *maison bouche* and his *maison pen*. No, Mrs. Conrad says the sub-editor, mild man, embarrassed by all this luggage was left behind at King's Cross, but Joseph Leopold actually took thought to deposit Mr. Goldring's ticket which, *en baron*, he was carrying, with the man on the arrival platform.

Of course they were tiresome. They sat up all night and every night choosing words, drinking strong coffee, which wives, sitting up too, have to make. They wrote in every room in the house, completely dressed or not, as they pleased, or as the fury of composition permitted. If people did not like seeing them in the garden in their bath robes people must look the other way or do without the Review and, if the bathroom was considered a better study than the parlour, people must wait to wash until the divine *furor* had

passed away. Mrs. Conrad jibbed at the loss of the bathroom at Someries, so she says, but I can tell her that it was just the same at St. Rémy-de-Provence a few years later. Joseph Leopold then annexed the only apartment in the hotel answering this description, though I must admit that it happened to be the room least in use.

Yes, it was all very "grand," as the children say. Authors, secretaries, publishers and even compositors and, of course, the public were to behave about literature for once in the Grand Manner. The original signatories to the Review began it, talking and acting like Doges and Chief Inquisitors—quixotic, even plain men called it. And I seem to remember the terms that were drawn up in the beginning. "The Publisher to bear all expenses of printing, publishing and everything except advertisements but to be paid ten per cent on his outlay and a fifth of the surplus." Oh, idealists! "A capitalist was to be found by Mr. Hueffer." We all kept our eyes open for one constantly. That is where I came in useful. Meanwhile, the Editor was to find money for advertisement and for such dastard contributors as took their payments in money. Black sheep, those.

And I chose to be as quixotic as the rest and forgo my remuneration. I wasn't going to be behindhand with—and—

No, never in all the annals of English journalism—I don't speak of French magazine writers, they are, one apprehends, sometimes actuated by altruistic literary motives; a people that throws up barricades in a single night is capable of giving its best work for nothing as easily as life for an idea—never surely in England was there such a reversion to the ideas, such an upholding of the tenets of chivalry as was implied in the terms of the agreement entered into by men who, after all, had wives and little children to keep.

Mr. Hudson and Mr. James were, in one way or another, comparatively immune from domestic cares—though once, indeed, my mother chivied all over London to find the latter a cook and spare him "the putrid vision" of what he called "enquiry places."

The Review got good authors and was wonderful—for a time. In all these sorts of ventures the Public and the Capitalist (or the lack of him) are in the end too much for the Authors. As old Buloz, of the *Révue des Deux Mondes*, said weeping: "When I

had authors I had no public; now that I have worked up a public I have no authors to speak of."

As for the Capitalist whom the lucky Buloz had no occasion to mention, he is nowadays a greater difficulty than the Public, and to get hold of that not uncommon animal for one's own purposes, is as wearing a job as the hunting of the Snark.

A Snark was eventually caught by me, as it happens. But it was ill to my purpose for Alfred Mond bought the Review as a business concern and for political purposes. His opinion at that time differed from the opinions of the editor, and the editor—unconsidered trifle—had to go.

But it was a great lark and nobody lost very much. No one's hopes ran very high from the first except those of the editor and the other babe of genius, Joseph Conrad. Arthur Marwood, who humbly helped to finance it, sank a good deal of money for the sake of the love he bore Joseph Leopold. And later, when the inevitable happened, one great man was quite content, so he averred, to "waive any golden anticipations he might have formed of the sale of the good will." Indeed, the author in question began grouching as soon as the fourth number was out and he is the best of business men as well as a popular genius.

Poor Conrad had no more, as he said, and claimed no more, of the editor, than a "verbal promise of participation" in his Review, "if we both live and it goes successfully." Conrad, a Russian Pole, quick, cunning, worldly wise in the foreign sense, must have guessed often what *cart de malheur* he was harnessing his genius to and tried desperately to import a business-like attitude into the affair. His letters at this time were full of attempts at "pinning down," as it were, his tricky partner, stout but *très en l'air*, to some definite course of action. He was eternally striving to lure the strong but wayward mentality he admired to focus things properly. . . "Please, my dear boy, give me a moment of attention. . ." Honest, careful, meticulous and very poor, he had his own subsidiary arrangements to make with his agent who, until his lamented death a few years ago, loomed large in the business field of both men. As a result of Conrad's extreme scrupulosity and sense of fairness Mr. Pinker remained his friend as well as his agent. He was

actually under a vow to Conrad to "see him off" and be a friend to his widow and sons.

Pinker was adept at the delicate art of *lending* Conrad money which Joseph Leopold also found as arduous a job as *extracting* it from some people. But these *gens de lettres* were all and everyone determined that, even if life and letters had to go, Conrad should not starve or anything like it. And, when Pinker died—first of the two and in a strange land—the sons of the jolly little agent motored down to Canterbury to tell Conrad of it like men in a romance.

The commitments of Conrad with Pinker during the existence of the Review had necessarily to be collocated with his arrangements with the editor, that is as much as to say, the editor's sanguine temperament with Conrad's bilio-lymphatic one. And Joseph Leopold was always sure of his power of manipulating men and events, even when the time came. The time was *always* there, Conrad saw that, and with his artistic sense of responsibility, insisted on the relations between the two men and their bantling being somehow stabilised. He was constantly reminding the editor of the conditions under which the editor had "offered him participation" and on which their relations were based.

But Conrad was touchy from temperament and nationality. Terribly gouty—his foot was generally a stranger to his boot and nearly always at odds with it. His voice, when the fit was on, had a rasping quality and his beautiful, innocent smile was conspicuously absent. He had to be handled carefully.

We all did. It was an understood thing. The attitude of us all to Conrad, of wife, of Joseph Leopold and, in some sort, me, always suggested the domestic tag of my humorous friend Lady Neish who tells me that, on engaging a cook, she always makes a point of saying:

"And remember, please, that mine is to be the only temper in this house."

His wife, luckily, appeared as different from her mate as chalk from cheese. Stout, calm, suasive and *débonnaire*, she perambulated Capel House and its uneven floors, leaning on her knobbed stick, with her long pearl earrings depending . . . She had, for me,

a curious effect of Queen Elizabeth . . . Or does my memory of those days play me a trick and will she write to the papers and say she never wears or has worn earrings? I don't know, as Joseph Leopold would say. At any rate, I have it on his authority that "Jess," as her husband called her about the house, tasting, as it seemed to me, lovingly on his tongue the so English name, had been extremely beautiful. "To Jessie and ——" Joseph Leopold dedicated what I may call half a book of his—it was one of those that they wrote together, inscribing on the title page the thoroughly English names of both their wives.

Queen Elizabeth and *Bonne-à-tout-faire* combined, this lady was indispensable to Conrad. Yes, authors are apt to get the wives they want—not so much those they deserve. I often wonder what the wives thought of *The English Review*? I often wonder the husbands did not quarrel badly! A little, sometimes, they did. The Miss Cather episode—of which I am sure that lady herself has never heard, worked up and mishandled, was trying. But the opposing temperaments of Conrad and Joseph Leopold must surely have afforded that zest which makes a misunderstanding almost fun to a couple of great and intriguing minds, a little in love with mischief for its own sake. At any rate, they "worked in" together very well. At Someries and The Pent they sat up all night helping each other to "find the word." Joseph Leopold, who had not then developed the writer's cramp that devastated him later, would take down Conrad at dictation and Conrad would assist the wonderful but flighty memory of his friend with exactitude from the stores of his. They both had memories and both were Pre-Raphaelites in their violent insistence on detail; even historical detail which, according to Conrad, must not only *seem* right but *be* right in order to be convincing. There is in "Zeppelin Nights" (which Joseph Leopold and I wrote together) a story by the former about the bird in its cage slung on the mast, that sang all through the battle of Trafalgar while Nelson lay dying in the cock-pit. Said Conrad, "The birdcage *might* have been outside on the mast—but only in *one* place and that is in the quarter gallery. And, as that's Admiral's quarters, no inferior official could have had access." Bang went Joseph Leopold's point! . . .

There was plenty of money at first to work on. The gold of cohorts of relations—German Hueffers, Dutch Hueffers, Paris Hueffers: tremendously rich, these Paris Hueffers; good Catholics, building churches; one of them, Hermann, the banker, having married his daughter to a French duke; all agog, and pleased to be called on to foster the English nephew's adventure with some sinews of war—was forthcoming. So was that of Arthur Pearson Marwood, the brave and gentle Yorkshire squire, the best, most loving friend an editor ever had—and wasted. He was of good birth and upbringing; *un galant homme*, as the foreigner, Conrad, conceded, though he himself had never actually sought "the man's" acquaintance—"He is more your friend than mine." The childish reservations that obtain among authors, as amongst schoolgirls! Marwood was an author, too—of a learned book on finance, and a hopeless invalid; a dandy in London and a farmer in Kent, where he would be sitting up all night with pigs and handling compost; yet his tortoiseshell brushes and trouser-presses used to electrify the editor's charwoman when he came to stay at 84 Holland Park Avenue.

And he is dead now and his monumental work on Finance—was it?—dead too and his chief claim to be remembered will be that he was permitted to finance *The English Review* and was a friend of Conrad and the uncle of Miss Margaret Kennedy, who is proud of him.

Like Conrad, he must have loved the editor very much to be able to stomach the smell of the chickens, to tolerate the small, low-roofed bedroom, the general tight-packedness which did not worry the host himself, since he would have been able to sleep upon a board. But, indeed, as Conrad used to say, the devotion of Marwood to his friend was "a matter of common knowledge." Conrad raised his rugged eyebrows about it half in fun. *What* advantage did one man seek when he trotted after the other like a faithful dog? "God only knows! You, too, perhaps." Sinister. Quite unmeaning!

Mr. Marwood was seriously consulted with regard to the merits of my importation into the affairs of the *Review* as reader, occasional sub-editor, contributor, but above all as a "society hand" and

touter for rich, influential subscribers. He took me a walk up Notting Hill Square and back, giving me some hints on his own account, as you might say. Then, having seen me home, he would return to his eager friend at 84 and wag his head. "Yes," he would say, "yes, she is a card"—in the Bennettian sense.

For, flashing in, meteoric, business-like, was my old acquaintance of the Paris boulevards, Arnold himself, with his tuft of rich brown hair falling over his level brow of genius, demanding his price and nothing but his price, about which, however, there was to be no paltering. "Well, I always pay my contributors exactly what they ask." This was the editor's system. Sometimes they didn't ask at all, or suggested modestly the derisive sum of a couple of guineas for a forty-pound article, like Mr. Cunninghame Graham. But Arnold Bennett sensibly insisted on the forty he had well earned by "The Matador of the Five Towns."

In all my days and the intercourse with wise and interesting men that they have brought me I have met and known none wiser than Arnold Bennett. I had heard of him, written for him in my green youth of serial literature when he was Enoch Arnold Bennett and edited an outstanding, truculent journal—of course Arnold Bennett could not, would not have allowed himself to edit anything wishy-washy or mealy-mouthed. It was called *Woman*—and *Woman* it was, with a big W. *Woman's* point of view—and that is not at all wishy-washy if you take them properly—was all over it. Consequently it was full of life—and spite. The column contributed by the beautiful Roy Devereux was the latest thing in modernity . . . yet her wild flights—and those of "scorchers" like Mrs. Lynn Linton ("The Girl of the Period") who actually wrote for it when she was the grandmother of those very girls—are the mere spiritless flappings of pigeons in a suburban garden compared with the flight range of to-day.

I was walking along the Boulevard des Capucines with William Somerset Maugham and he said suddenly:

"There's Bennett!"

I said, "Catch him!" and he did. And I introduced him very soon to Agnes Farley, to whom I used to go and give an account of myself every day—there was no room for me in the Rue de la

Paix and I had any odd room out. A different *gite* was found for me every time I went to Paris. After our introduction we got on so well that we arranged to dine together in a different restaurant every night. That's what we did, and the Bal Bullier or the Moulin de la Galette afterwards, or hot milk in his rooms in the Rue de Calais among his Empire furniture. Then he would sit down to the piano and play me Chopin. He had just taught himself music. He sat rigid like a pupil, deeply concerned with position and fingering, expressing effort and concentration in every line of his body. Amateur he might be but laboriously, tightly, like this he gave me the famous prelude which, we novelists had agreed, was intended to represent the drumming of the surges over a drowned man at the bottom of the sea—did he tell me this or did I imagine it myself? The chords came down like a man's dogged stumping on the stairs—had a solemn reverberation, a savage intensity that the jaunty playing of a trained pianist would perhaps have lacked, but then he would not have been thinking of a drowned man. . . .

Perhaps Arnold Bennett would have just finished a book and would show it me, written out in his exquisite hand on the very best paper, bound in the finest, most flexible calf—the only copy. I would offer to take it back to England with me next day and hand it to the publisher—but no, he would not trust it to me, he preferred to send the only MS. of his work by post, unregistered . . . I don't think it was distrust of me exactly. The sending of it in this careless way was but a fetish, like Doctor Johnson's posts in Lichfield Town that, while walking up the street, he had to touch without missing one.

He told me he wrote four books a year. One shocker, two populars and one to please himself. He would scold me for reading the shockers:

"I distinctly told you *not* to read *Hugo's*. It is astonishing that I cannot keep my friends from reading the un-literature which I write solely in order to be in a position to offer myself a few luxuries."

Another cabinet covered with the bees of Napoleon or a splendid binding from Bihn's or—well, not a yacht as yet. Once, so he wrote, it was the luxury of a wife that he was about to offer

himself. She was a friend of mine and Mrs. Farley's. He was as sentimental about this as anyone of his shocker heroes. "Strange thing existence is! Maugham runs after me on the boulevard and brings me to you and, in no time at all, I am engaged to——" And he was now re-reading all he had ever written on the subject of "the mixed up thing they call Love" and was astonished to realise the insight he always had had. Yes, he had been given quite a new belief in himself. But, indeed, he always had believed in himself so thoroughly that there was now some danger of a spill over. . . . It was up to me now, for he was waiting to see "what sort of a letter of congratulation a woman experienced in literature and love could write."

It did not pan out, but he reassured me. I need not feel at all guilty as regarded my participation or "agency in my history." He wouldn't blot out the last six months for anything. He knew a devil of a lot about women before—that he did!—well, now he knew more, and he was not one who thought it possible to buy knowledge too dearly.

I said that was the right frame of mind for an author—that an author should be able to turn duns, jiltings, tight boots, dark days and bedevilments of all sorts "to favour and to prettiness," as Florizel said of Perdita. He agreed; he was "a writer first and—the rest came afterwards."

He became suddenly very famous—not, of course, on *Hugo's* and kindred works which merely sell well, and that is all that is expected of them—but on the fourth kind of novel which he wrote to please himself. No one rejoiced more cordially than his old friend, H. G. Wells. I was staying with them at Spade House—so called, I am told, because of a great door knocker in the shape of a spade which Voysey, the architect, had fixed to the door—and H. G. had been up to town to see Elizabeth Robins. He got home very late, ravenous, and Jane ministered to him. Just before he went into the dining-room he tossed a book into my lap:

"There, read that. The best novel that's been written for a hundred years! That book is going to be It!"

It was *The Old Wives' Tale*, *désormais historique*. Mrs. Farley told me that, for weeks, he had sat at the feet of and listened to

old Madame Filloneau, who had been a girl all through the Third Empire and knew every inch of the wonderful old Paris in which Sophia abode after her unhappy marriage.

Well, do not say that authors—some authors, at least—are not generous about other authors! The South Coast Triumvirate, as I called them, were not ashamed to exhibit enthusiasm for other men working in the same line as themselves. Listen to Joseph Leopold in print! “Conrad’s leavings out, as matchless as his inclusions.” And, “He came to England an Elizabethan, the greatest English poet of to-day.” And the modest Mr. Hudson was always deprecating the praise he received from the Sage of Aldington.

Arnold Bennett was very handy and useful about the Review. Perhaps if he had edited it it might have paid its way, though it certainly would have been less *chic*. He was always advising the editor about the new, quite efficient piece of work on which he himself was engaged, “quite useless for an ordinary serial but something *The English Review* really ought to pawn its soul for.” Observe, he postulates a soul for this periodical. (Souls are, of course, exceptional and hardly to be looked for between the covers of a magazine.) This story dealt, I believe, with the mentality of The Yellow Press, and I fear the editor did not acquire it. ’Twas “a short, ironic, humorous but occasionally tragic sort of novel” in the same vein as *A Great Man*, but, “of course, far better!”

The sub-editress found these letters great fun. This contributor laid down guano so skilfully and showed such deep acquaintance with the mentality of an editor whom, up to then, he had never seen. He swore he would only send *The English Review* “something so good that it was too good to be accepted by any other editor.” He would give him the opportunity of “jumping” at a serial for the August number and naturally counted upon the editor’s “keeping the August opening open” until he had seen it for, like all his serious stuff, it would be the best he had ever done.

And confident! Always a Card. “My book on the Yellow Press has to come out before anybody else’s, and it will.” It did. It was a play.

“So there, in a manner of speaking, we all were.” The quota-

tion of one of Henry James's favourite catchwords is properly indicated in connection with the personnel of this review. Indeed, they were all there, some in the letter only—that is to say, the spirit. Thomas Hardy, who used to send stories to the *Contemporary* from Tooting when it was under the editorship of the editor's father, was sending now to his son all the way from Dorset. One never knew what literary *sommité* one might meet in that long, country-house shaped office and drawing-room combined. There was Stephen Reynolds, author of that essay in the macabre, "The Holy Mountain," lurching in unexpectedly with Bob Woolley, his sailor mate, with whom he lived at Sidmouth and let boats and rowed people about the harbour, gathering pearls from the lips of clients as they fell.

And always, as if he had walked straight up the Oxford Road from the other end of it stretching back into Wiltshire, was another great old friend of mine, the tall, eagle-faced Mr. Hudson.

This old man, the price of whose letters sold in open markets runs into two figures each, had been the husband of an unsuccessful boarding-house keeper. I confess I cannot see him in this capacity, one of less *éclat* even than being *le mari de la danseuse*. Perhaps the extraordinary modesty he preserved through life was a result of this condition. At any rate, by this time, he had already written some of his best books. He talked literature constantly with Joseph Leopold—their literary judgements were never in agreement and both knew it. But Joseph Leopold thought the world of "Huddy's" performance and was always praising him, in print and out of it. Huddy was thankful; he wanted his books to sell but he looked upon it as friendly eyewash, accepting as an unearned compliment "the way Joseph Leopold spreads himself over my stuff" and "the very flattering words he has written of me in his critical works—in his most *uncritical* moments, to be sure!" And when his reputation was European he would still be astonished to see how Joseph Leopold would "let himself go so extravagantly about my stuff."

The boarding-house habit was perhaps ingrained. He and his wife were now living in Tower House, an ugly one in St. Luke's Road which Emily Hudson, the wealthy one so far as I could

make out, had bought with her own money. They let the ground and the top floor, furnishing the middle one for themselves. But I never went to see her there. She would have been rude to me? . . . While talking to him I was always conscious of this witch of German legend, this Rapunzel, sitting there in her tower, her short legs propped up on a huge footstool, claiming the constant society of her distinguished husband who, then, was not making money. She was always ill and she got worse so that he dared not leave her—"As things are now I never know if I can take an hour out." And when he did come to tea he always flew back to Tower House, rain or shine, in the middle of a speech, shedding his teacup half emptied, at six o'clock. He had evidently made her a promise. . . .

Well, I think it is good for men to make their wives promises and for noble men, like Huddy, to keep them.

Two years after the starting of the Review he had to send her away to live in Worthing with a companion. He ran down to see her now and then . . . and I fancy her lambent jealousy blew into a thin, querulous flame. Her charmer charmed other people: how could he help it? He was one of the handsomest men of his time. When she died in 1921 she had been away from his side for eight years and the cord was loosed. But he still thought of her as "the one person who knew him and whom he knew." That is all. Well, one can say as much for an old servant.

They called themselves friends. I don't think she quite liked it for she asked him once why he always spoke of her to people as "his companion." I don't wonder, for she was, or had been, a woman of the world and must have realised that this is the stock designation used by the gentleman who, as newspapers say, "is travelling with a lady who is not his wife." He vowed it was more complimentary than calling her wife, "for a companion is more to a man than his wife . . ."

I don't know. I use Joseph Leopold's honest and habitual phrase about psychological manifestations. Huddy's attitude perhaps bore rather hard on Emily. He distinctly admitted to me once, apropos of a ghost story of mine, "I *do* believe in hopeless, changeless love, like that of your hero, Everard." And again, "I do not doubt that

many a man *has* died of love and been eaten by worms, in spite of Shakespeare."

I pointed out, thinking of Emily, that to me the use of the adjective "hopeless" obscured the issue. Hopeless love has the best chance of survival. "Love that never finds its earthly close" yearns after that fulfilment and calls that yearning fidelity.

Emily Hudson believed in fidelity—fidelity beyond the grave. She bought her grave in Broadwater Cemetery, was buried in it and lay awaiting him . . .

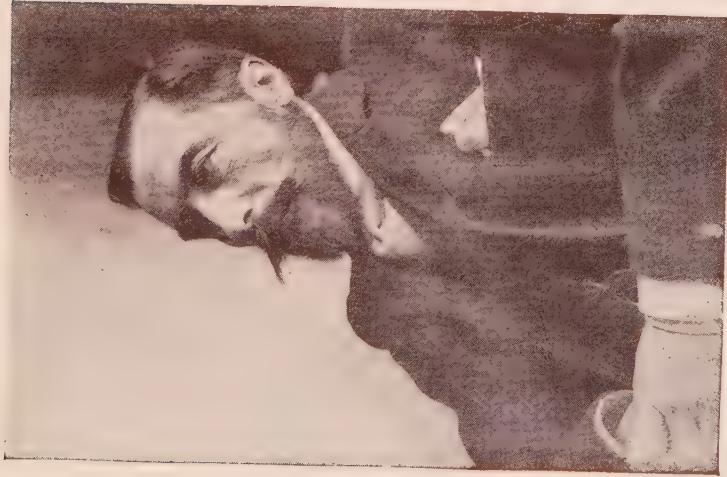
I had met him for the first time at a tea-party, when he was married and starving in Southwick Crescent and I was a lively child too much brought forward for her age, allowed to "pour tea" for her mother's great friend, Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton. It was in one of those sets of furnished apartments where that lady entertained her European friends every season. I hope I gave him enough cake. He may have been about forty-five, and his hair was already grizzled. His skin was dark, and colour was on his high cheek-bones which was not there in the last three years of his life. He appeared to my eyes so foreign-looking that I first missed, and then almost seemed to see, the earrings in his ears and the scimitar in his sash. But he was, in effect, wearing a blue serge reefer suit. He wore mostly brown in later years. That he was physically restless I would not say; he had his long limbs in perfect control; but as he sat poised on the music-stool which was all, in the press of celebrities, that Mrs. Moulton was able to offer a late arrival, his attitude suggested a half-tame, complaisant bird that will rest for a moment on a bough or a plinth near you with seeming confidence but is all the same summarising its way of escape from your blandishments. I felt it so much, I suppose, that, with childish bluntness, I remarked that I should not have expected to meet him there. He said simply that Mrs. Moulton had asked him, so he came. It was a way she had—a good way with these shy, wilder, more modest celebrities she wanted to get to her parties.

Nowadays he did not look much older, and, perhaps, less hungry. And he was certainly shabbier. His dun, travel-stained coat on his arm always looked as if, like the clothes of the labourers whose lives he studied, it had been rained on, wetted and dried,

and wetted again. But when he shrugged it off and laid it down he appeared as neat, as graceful, and as well dressed as John Galsworthy, and that is saying a great deal. Both tall, with figures that a tailor would delight to dress; but I see Mr. Galsworthy in spacious halls always, or, maybe, at a race-meeting, but not stooping, abrogating his height, like Mr. Hudson, under the eaves of a stone-cropped roof in Marten or Broad Chalke, in any old cottage room he might have taken wherein to concentrate on the malfeasant life of the cuckoo and the sadly short engagement here of that famous singer, the nightingale.

Quiet, gentle, urbane, abstracted: in both I would observe "the spirit of deathless calm," which it is a prerogative of some sorts of genius to maintain in all these stations of the mind, in this swallow flight of our life—the calm that was denied all along to the anxious ego of Conrad, who was precluded from it, perhaps, by the foreign airs that presided over his birth. Read *Sintram*, that Teutonic nightmare of De la Motte Fouqué, and you will share the image that he inspired in me, and realise the hectic, fierce, and passionate *wesen* of Conrad which pervaded 84, that justified the editor's attitude of almost cringing respect—the German's innate cult of the mysterious superman. For Conrad *was* rather mysterious; present yet invisible, heard but in our intimate expectations; like the great god Pan who lurked unseen. One never knew when he was about, for, if he was, he did not always show, and his friend, by order, perhaps, never said.

Once that autumn the editor and I were asked to a quiet dinner with a poetess—now Lady Dilke—and her husband, and he called for me. It was foggy, the worst day of the year. We were eating quails stewed in wine, with little green grapes in the cocottes with them. Suddenly the editor let out that he had left Conrad at home in Holland Park Avenue, sitting over the fire with a bad cold. He was not allowed to hide his light under a bushel any longer, and the telephone was used. But Conrad—on the telephone I heard his queer, foreign voice—refused to stir out in the fog, but was going straight to bed. The editor drew a vivid picture of the great man sitting, full of aches and pains, grouting there in the lonely flat over a dying fire, and leaving even that



9.

her at once under escort, direct" (underlined) "to the prison-hospital in Kiev, where she will be treated as her case demands."

"For God's sake, Mr. B., see that your sister goes away punctually on the day. Don't give me this work to do with a woman—and with one of your family too. I simply cannot bear to think of it."

He was absolutely wringing his hands. My uncle looked at him in silence. ^{he}

"Thank you for ~~warning me~~. ~~I~~ ^{you} assure you that even if she were dying she would be carried out to the carriage."

"Yes—indeed—and what difference would it make ~~to~~ ^{to send} to Kiev or ~~anywhere~~. For she would have to go. ~~Order work as we do it.~~

And mind, Mr. B., I will be here on the day, not that I doubt your promise but because I must. I have got to. Duty. All the same my trade is ~~not~~ ^{not} fit for a dog since some of you ~~will~~ ^{will} persist in ~~making trouble~~ ^{making trouble} and all of you ~~will~~ ^{will} have got to suffer for it."

This is the reason why he was ~~sitting~~ ^{there} in an open three-horse

trap pulled up between the house and the great gates ~~on the~~ ^{on the}

~~the~~ ^{the} ~~scorn~~ ^{scorn} of all believers in the rights of conquest ~~on~~ ^{for a}

other hand, I am in a position to state the name of the Governor-General who signed the order with the marginal note "to be carried out to the letter" in his own handwriting. The gentleman's name was Bezak. A ~~great~~ ^{great} dignitary, an energetic ~~man~~ ^{official}

Each generation has its memories.

poor comfort for the colder one of the cubicular bedroom. I thought that Joseph Conrad—his two *Christian* names, as it happens—must be very fond of Joseph Leopold to put up with the bedroom, but, then, he was used to the cabins of merchant ships.

This was probably during one of his darker days—a fit of toothache, perhaps; one of those evil hours that come to authors round about the *enfantement* of a masterpiece. For they are all to be masterpieces, and that is why the merest, tiniest essay costs the writer of it so dear. Conrad would think nothing of writing to me or the editor a letter headed with, or in the corner, “Pray for me these days!” And we knew at once it was a question of literary parturition.

For the curse of Eve lies very heavy on *les vrais gens de lettres*, and they do not always get even the apple. “In pain and travail shalt thou bring forth”—and, what is worse, hate the bantling, take a dislike to the infant that perhaps, instead of smiling up at you, appears to be stillborn. Hear the cries, heart-rending, that go up from their several desks! Inspiration dead and Imagination yet working in *le vide*! This suggests a form of torture that no one but a potential mechanician could have devised for himself. Moans over the damnable worry of making a start with stuff in which one doesn’t believe! But, all the same—damn it!—“one goes on spinning out of oneself like a disillusioned spider in a gale.” I am sure that particular author must, like his friend Huddy, have watched long by some worm-eaten outhouse door a hapless spider’s gyrations, to have felt like saying that!

“How to guard myself against the most deplorable of failures is my difficulty—the thing itself my haunting fear and the necessity of writing, my despair.” There was hard-up-ness . . . there was gout . . . but I think that toothache has a lot to do with such an exclamation as “Really, I’m not fit to live!” Conrad especially would have nothing done to his teeth if he could help it. No author, I have noticed, can easily bear the file. The forceps, perhaps, and gas, but the file is crueller than death, and it was, indeed, what killed one author that I know of—or, rather, his avoidance of it.

There seem to have been always such things as authors’ special

dentists and doctors, whose mission it has been to attend to the fraternity and their families. There was Dr. Ogle, of Cavendish Square, and Dr. Quain, who attended the Hunt and Millais families, there was Mr. Pootz or Deutz—I have spelt his name wrong, and perhaps it is as well, for he was responsible for a great deal of harm done to the grinders of Robert Browning and Leighton and to my mother's, who execrated him.

The editor and Conrad and I about this time had the same doctor—"Tebby-Tebb," as we called the queer, clever, weedy man who stooped so for despair, not laziness. Himself he could not save. But you called him and he came, hasting, his baggy umbrella in front of him, the flaps of his greatcoat nearly touching the ground, looking like Santa Claus or the Old Clo' Man bringing the babies. He brought several Pre-Raphaelite babies into the world and one of Conrad's. He was a magician, a wonder-doctor, as one would have expected from his quack-like appearance, white-complexioned, blue-eyed, bewildered. . . . He took your case home to think out a cure for it—keeping it a terrible time. Say you had something the matter with your fingers? Weeks hence he would reappear with a bag, put some unknown drug into your shoulder, and, hey presto! you were cured. But how could a man like that make money? He was always poor—and likely to remain so.

And for literary accouchements we all had the same practitioner, "Jy B"—"The Pinker of Agents," so Conrad the Paladin called him. Conrad was generous, for Pinker held most of us, and especially Conrad, in the hollow of his hand. Had he not been a dear he could have worked untold mischief among the manuscripts and worried some of us out of our lives. Pinker was my director as well, and had he managed to dispose of those three short stories I sent him Mr. Wells would not have sent me to the *English Review* with them, and I should never have become intimate with the editor of it, nor with Conrad. So there it is! Peace be with his bones!

This association—Damon and Pythias-like—tender and affectionate though shot with furies, arrogancies, misunderstandings, scoldings and ill-acceptances of them: of Joseph Leopold and Joseph Conrad—subsisted until the Great War, when Conrad and I

were left to correspond about our precious pawns lent to England. It began with *Romance* and their association in the writing of it. The birth of *Romance* was a legend by the time I came to know Conrad. I used to hear how they had lived together for some time at The Pent, a tumbledown farm under the shadow of a great cliff in the South Country, where the kitchen has a wavy floor like the pavement of St. Mark's, and perhaps for the same reason; where the man who ran the farm had his oozy midden in front of the doorstep; how Walter Crane, to whom they for a time rented it, actually ventured to cut about the sixteenth-century door lintel so as to get a Walter Crane Children's Book motto over it; how they would not choose to dine together, because the carrying-out of Conrad's high views of the proper correction of children might offend the editor, who believed in letting his infants ride over *him*. So they met only in the intervals of what Conrad called "vile but indispensable sensual gorging of grey matter." I have seen that wavy floor, that motto over the door, that midden. I thought of taking The Pent once, but the ridges might have tripped me up, and the smell of decaying straw outside disgusted me.

There these two, with their families, strove and sorrowed and rejoiced together over the impersonal—if you will have it so—works of the spirit, in which they really and truly lived. They sighed together over the paucity of the reviews of *Romance*; they jubilated when things looked up a little. That they were both in their second editions—"mon cher, savez vous?"—Conrad wrote to the editor, who was in America meeting S. S. McClure, much drawn by the puissant charm of him. And then there was a slight reverse, but Conrad bid his pal buck up, declaring that he had by no means given up hope of seeing "the thing" soar into the lofty altitudes of prosperity one day soon. He "quite thought" it would run to ten thousand or so.

Or so!

And there were scoldings, too—what we used to call *rixes*. A sight of Conrad was the plum that the editor was in the habit of extending to "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!" and for once, perhaps, he had pledged Conrad's time and amenity too far or too malapropos.

"What do you mean? *What* the devil *do* you mean?" No, Mr. Conrad knew nothing of the editor's relations with, his friendship with, or his regard for, Miss C. Miss C. had been described as an American lady whom the editor wanted him to see—something to do with McClure's magazine. She wanted a story from Conrad and "God knows what" from somebody else: intended descending on the great man on a certain day, arriving at Smeeth by the 10.45 and leaving in the afternoon. The fierce author shouts that he won't have it. The proper thing for the lady to do was to ask for an interview. It is obvious she did not ask because she did not want it, but wanted to call on him casually. And Conrad was not to be treated like that! This was not the way to serious business! He was a man who could not afford to be disturbed by casual visitors. . . .

The American lady did not get her interview. Indeed, I do not think that Conrad ever cared very much for the idea of America.

But the editor of the *English Review* was pursued by the *feu follets* of American participation in his magazine as long as the Review lasted. Conrad bade him detach his mind from these fanciful undertakings and remember that the fair fame of an honourable attempt lay open to him, if not an unqualified success. He certainly had the first.

I often wonder if S. S. M. could really have helped; if the editor was not, after all, more a man of the world than Conrad, and had he got the rights of it? The great American monopolist editor and publisher was a personage. He was in London about the time of the first number.

I got an invitation: "Cortège will leave the Savoy about nine o'clock. . . . I wouldn't disturb you so cavalierly if S. S. M. wasn't so useful an acquaintance." Naturally. I was to come at half-past nine to his box at the Empire, where Kyasht was dancing.

I soon gathered that he, the editor, and Perceval Gibbon had been dining at the Savoy, and that there had been a three-cornered row and the dinner-rolls and even knives had flown freely. S. S. may not have taken part; he gave me the impression of strength and contained violence very rare in an American. Perhaps Fro-

cess, Co. Antrim, had something to do with the *trempe* of his rather sinister personality. He seemed like a large wild beast kept quiet by food at stated times. He did not listen—at least, not to me—but treated me as a merely inconsiderable member of the editor's literary harem. At all events, I placed no stories with him, though I allowed him to make me rather conspicuous. It wasn't so bad as making me drink tea in the theatre, but he did buy chocolates, and, between the acts, placed one between my lips . . . and again. Having been told "to be nice to him," I quietly held my mouth open like a child in the nursery. The editor had bought me a Teddy Bear glove from a man at the door as we came in. We all got into a four-wheeler, and they dropped me at my house, going on to finish the night at 84. What was left of it after that, the editor informed me, he had passed in tears. So much for an *accaparant* personality!

Conrad was very sarcastic about this party, asking if the great man had, perchance, offered to buy up the Review and the editor, lock, stock, and barrel, including 84, the shop downstairs, and the adjacent Tube station, so as to transplant the whole show to U.S.A., and with it whip creation, break things, etc. "I shouldn't wonder." But he hoped that all the American had got from the editor was a soothing smile? He could not understand how the editor could take such a prestidigitous person seriously, or why the editor insisted on giving "me this stuff that makes me furious and unhappy."

Unless words were wind, facts mist, the confidence that the editor had placed in him a mere caprice of fancy, and unless "an absolute loyalty of thought on my part *contra mundum*" gave no privilege, then, indeed, Conrad had no right to warn him. He always said, after one of these candid outbursts, that he knew well that the editor would dismiss all his objections of every sort with one wave of the hand, but still he persisted. It cost him much. Every intervention in the editor's affairs, domestic, literary or business, he said, ensured him at least four unhappy days, and there was no reason, that he knew of, why he should be wretched "except from sheer affection."

The truth was that Conrad was awfully fond of the editor, and could not bear to see him "prodigal of toil and talent," and

making a mess of things generally, for want of that sympathetic imagination of which one who knew him best had accused him. On the other hand, the attitude of the editor to Conrad was a monument of humility, whatever the wife of his bosom may say.

Conrad and James were, more or less, our mentors—interchangeable. They both sermonised us both. I had known Henry James longer than the editor had, but he had the advantage of me as regards Conrad, and I think he loved Conrad more than I loved James. Henry James was kinder, less selfish; Conrad was ruder, and more lovable. The editor adored Conrad. I never heard him speak of Conrad without the most reverent affection, though he did allow himself to chip at him sometimes to me. In matters of literature his attitude was servile, positively. To James he posed merely as *le jeune homme modeste*, but his native arrogance appeared to be completely obliterated when Conrad was in the room. He imitated him, even to the point of cultivating in himself some one or other of Conrad's phobias. All great men have phobias. He used to say he suffered from agoraphobia—or was it claustrophobia? They seem to me very interchangeable. A breakdown in the street or a breakdown in a drawing-room, the market-place or the field? The Lake District is less lonely than a long street in Bloomsbury where I have seen the editor weaken and totter. These two confessed to sharing "queer sensations of being no longer in this world" as they sat writing. "Heart thumps, head swims!"—"It's funny, but startling." The thought of a journey made either of them tremble. "I shirk going out into the road. . . . I get over-excited and worried with new faces. . . . Something peculiar with me!"

Not so very peculiar for such cattle as these! How one recognises the symptoms of nervous breakdown that assail all men who subsist on their own nervous energy, and, peradventure, keep a family with it! To feel, as soon as a journey is threatened, that one is not coming back again, is an elementary sensation of the kind. I always feel it myself. And suicide! Every author thinks of suicide when he cannot get *le mot juste*, or is spinning a web of fiction like the spider in a gale; to adopt Conrad's expressive phrase,

"making an effort for copy or die!" It seems simpler almost to die. "The latter the easier feat—and so beautifully final!"

The interchange of these *Morituri te salutant* is just the waving of the arms resorted to after an effort of conversation, the awful yawn of satiety, the sense of virtue gone out of one.

The doyen of the Review, as I suppose he might be called, was Henry James. I remembered him from the time that he was really Henry James Junior on both covers; his books and his own fleshly envelope. I think he was not more than thirty when he first came to England and to London and was fêted and went everywhere on the strength of one little short story in *The Cornhill*. I think that the study of the little American girl represents his one excursion into psychology. Daisy was both flighty and deep, pure and simple in spite of appearances, and appearances are all that Mr. James's art ostensibly concerns itself with. I think I should call *him* a Literary Flirt.

He was a tall, rather thick-set man with a black beard and olive-coloured skin—the word *dyspepsia* written all over the cover of him. I first set eyes on this man who was to be such a friend to me when I was in the shop of a Bond Street chemist with my mother. He came in *avec une mine effarée*—his pet phrase, and pet look—and asked urgently for a certain medicine procurable only at this shop, where they purported to sell American drugs. He wanted, immediately, a palliative of the fits of indigestion which assailed him at odd times with such might that he would have to leave—actually in the midst of a sentence—the house or club where he was having tea with me to go home and lie down. . . .

Henry James has been accused of mincing matters; he certainly did not mince words, any more than the late Mr. W. H. Hudson. Genius never does, I think. Anyway, I got a letter a few days later to account for the truncated tea-party:

"I was really very ill at the moment, as I sat there conversing of the higher themes. I had inflammation—saving your presence—of the bowels and went to bed for six days in anguish."

Our formal meeting was at the house of an American artist for whom I posed very frequently—George Boughton. It was at

a party at his new house on the top of Campden Hill, and the young American was introduced to me and to my mother:

"Mamma," I said, "he looks as if he ought to be wearing earrings."

Henry James as a Corsair! An Elizabethan sailor! This was the effect the man made on a young girl, with his dark, silky beard and wonderful eyes. The antithesis was as sudden as that of Charles Hawtrey as Ambrose Applejohn—dancing with himself as a pirate, cutlass and all, which greeted us on the posters a year ago.

He never, so far as I know, honoured the office with his presence. I don't believe he ever set foot in it—the clearing house of his fancies—the mart of his fictional gains. They were always small. I verily believe Henry James thought less of the monetary rewards of the vast emporiums of *mots justes* that were his novels than even Conrad and Joseph Leopold. His circulation, so his publisher gave me to understand, was exactly the same as mine—nothing very grand! No one ever heard him talk pounds, shillings and pence—certainly the disgraceful gag "so much per thou" never crossed his chaste lips. But, for others . . . he was quite amiably sensible of the cash impetus that might be driving them. I have a letter congratulating Joseph Leopold on the success of a book: "Epoch making, my dear fellow! Epoch to be elegant, not crudely putting it money. But may the time-quantity in the word translate itself into the handsomest cheque-quantity, is the prayer of yours, Henry James."

And later, to me, just when the great voyage home was to be undertaken:

"Why don't you, too, come over to the U. S.? You don't need, I seem to make out, for sordid reasons, but you would none the less have a great success there and enlarge by vast accretions your Public and your Popularity."

Offices, literary clubs, all the dusty purlieus of literature was not for him. Marble halls in the wealthy North—Aubusson carpets in the Faubourg St. Germain in Paris . . . the Velvet Glove all the time . . .

Perhaps he was right from his own point of view. He lived, as Lucas Malet once told me she preferred to do, "among his raw

material." And it was not to be so very raw neither, a little triturerated . . . annealed . . . bolted, as you say of flour.

He had no use for the third class on his literary railway. He hated the proletariat nor stooped to chronicle their grubby, untidy, unwieldy emotions. You would never think of telling him the good thing your charwoman or your children's nurse had said that morning. He might perhaps stretch a point for the family butler or Mrs. Wix. And I remember his comic and loudly expressed disgust and disapprobation of Mrs. Sitwell's selection of a Tilburina for her wedding to Mr. Colvin. As both parties were past their first youth there was neither bridesmaid or best man. The duties of Henry were to meet Tilburina, the Confidante, at the Station and, with her, to await the happy pair, hand them their bouquets and their tickets and speed them on their honeymoon.

He wiped his brow. "Give me a cup of tea! I have been careering about the platform at Paddington . . . you know that interminable stretch of boards . . . all alone with an actress! . . . for half an hour, till the Colvins turned up."

She was and is a very nice actress, as famous in her line as Henry was in his. But Henry had not yet written a play or received his *baptême de feu*, appearing behind the footlights to stand the booing of a displeased public.

I shall never forget the first night of *Guy Domville* and the ironic cries for "Author" of a play that had, alas, bored even faithful me. Why, oh, why, did he take that call? He was not allowed to speak or, indeed, to finish a single sentence. That of itself would be the circle of an Inferno for the man whom no one ever Interrupted. The cruelty of it! The soft, plastic face, the helpless hands! The beautiful voice nearly extinguished! The full-bodied Boos! It was like prodding a soft, large animal in the Zoo. He was so surprised, so pained, so brave. His large white handkerchief covered his face and, from behind it, appeared to issue chunks and gobbets—the maimed fragments of a clever speech. It was not of course finished but he "made a fettle of it," as we say in the North, retiring sadly and patiently, rather like an elephant who has had a stone put into his trunk instead of a bun. And "George," the people's idol, came forward, *blême*, and as-

sured his impatient public that they should *not* be given Jamesian comedy if they didn't like it—no—and he would put on something they would like at once . . . at once. . . . Mr. Alexander's crooked mouth had no smile and Henry James, if he had indulged in that weakness, would certainly never have done it again.

Up to this time he went out all the time—"proudly, damnably, inordinately tangled in engagements," but I think that the iron of failure had entered so deep that, except for bustling, determined appearances from time to time in managers' offices, rehearsals—for after "Guy" he went on writing plays all the more, of course—he sought a Capua and found it, in Sussex.

It may have been partly ill-health, that indigestion always lying in wait—it was easier to Fletcherise there—or it may have been money? He was not a popular author. Or could it have been a grappling to him of a side of life missed until now, a response to the lost strain of poetry in this man's nature, a counterpoise to the feverish delights of his intense social life in town? A rococo retreat, a stage withdrawal—an attempt to possess his own shy, reluctant soul for a time, before all was nothing and the author, the artist in words, mere man and dead at that?

Joseph always said it was Love which drove Henry James forth from what everyone who knew him counted his chosen paradise. A hopeless passion for a fair compatriot, a lady whose name was associated with a certain renowned shaving soap and whose amiable caprices led him, unsatisfactorily for art and himself, from pillar to post . . . from De Vere Gardens to Lamb House. Or perhaps it was a "Daisy Miller," who knows? It was certainly not the wealthy heiress who had posed, according to her own showing, for the doomed "Milly" in *The Wings of the Dove*. She assumed it and made him rather angry. . . .

Long, long ago there *was* a lovely girl, the daughter of a well-known Punch artist who was my father's friend, whom her companions of the ballroom used to chaff about her elderly admirer. No one, of course, permitted himself to chaff Henry about her. To this gay, round-faced, rather portly young girl Mr. James certainly paid more particular attention than he did to anyone else who

was not a widow—widows seemed always to have what I believe is called a “cinch” on him.

We were all girls together at the seaside in the green youth of our days—“the Vi-Queens of Whitby”¹ whom George Du Maurier drew in Punch, once a week, till he brought so many folk to Whitby to see us that the townsfolk gave him a house for nothing! And for companions on our jaunts we had such *sommités* as James Russell Lowell, then Minister for the United States, Henry Irving, George Smalley of *The Tribune*, George Lewis of Ely Place and last but not least Charlie Phelps, the son of the succeeding American Minister. . . . He was our songster. Yes, we sang, we danced, we walked out to teas on the moors, we did theatricals in the Hall by the Sea. . . . Henry James was always to the fore for walks though not for dancing. He was *her* property—by then nearly everyone was her property—and of her friend, Daisy White-side! He never proposed . . . we thought it was because she was too young. And she perished miserably of a devastating complaint . . . but not before she had married and borne four children. These four boys . . . but thereby hangs another tale of another great man’s love for the Lady of the Crooked Smile.

I don’t believe that her youth was the reason he never proposed. I rather believe there was a sister—or a cousin—complex. He showed me a portrait once, in a secret drawer, taken out and handled with the intensest reverence, of a girl who had died, an invalid. . . . I shall never forget the hush of the room while he slowly took the thing out of the silver paper wrappings. . . . I know that I, talkative enough, was strangely silenced. And it was only a sister! Sisterly love was not and never had been so much to me.

When he came up to town he used to stay at the — Club, handy for the Athenæum. He used to come and see me in my house, nicely *montée* for entertaining and to anyone of my three clubs. He delighted in my Saturdays at the Socialist New Reform Club, where the members consumed eggs beaten up in glasses, where the walls were of a duck-coloured green and the three windows after dark enjoyed a view of the glittering pharos advertising

¹ Vi-Queens, play on Vikings,

Sir Thomas Dewar's excellent whiskey outlined on a screen of Whistler blue. Mr. Bernard Shaw appropriately tenants that room now.

And there was the little old Writers' Club, still going I believe, high over a baker's—was it?—in Fleet Street. It was the first really literary and journalistic woman's club to be started and I was in at the birth. There was an old housekeeper who came every day and was supposed to be there on Sundays. Only, every now and then one would take Alfred Harmsworth or Harold Frederic or George Moore there for a cup of tea on a Sunday afternoon and batter in vain at the lower door. Next day . . . "Me daughter was bad and I didn't think no one would come!"

Alfred Harmsworth was a curious, silent, black-coated chrysalis of a young man, uninteresting but suggesting power in a slim, slick way. He would probably have under his arm a large, bound volume for my acceptance, *Answers*—or *Forget-me-Not*, of which he was far prouder. I have it still. I understood that he had four of these little things on at the time and was contemplating a fifth magazine to run. Among others, I introduced this silent young man, who did not even look like Napoleon at that time, to Henry James who scented the arrant commercialism, and made nothing of him.

Henry, always protesting, was quite glad to make new friends. "It's death to me to meet new women and make new acquaintances. Notes, dinners, complications of all sorts are sown by hasty introductions even as dragon's teeth. . . ." Oh, yes, he hated formal dinners; he was always *asking* me to have "a little table at my little white discreet club and let us be obscure and happy." Not he! I once acted on the spirit of his commands and, at the New Reform Club, pretended not to see a lady who had pervaded the drawing-room for nearly an hour, seeing that I was entertaining angels—not unawares—hovering, pining to be introduced. After she had given it up and gone away I told Mr. James of my care for him. And he positively wailed out, "Oh, *why* didn't you? I can take care of myself."

That was true. Needless to mother H. J. in this way and some-

times dangerous; one ran a risk of losing him a meeting with a "Mona Maltravers" or a "Princess Casamassima."

I used to suffer, like other people, from the truncated anecdote. I used to take little mice—accounts of incidents or things I fancied would interest him—and lay them at his feet. So they did, as raw material. But while one was trying to be accurate, massing every detail painstakingly, so as to be of use, he would unerringly extract the ore from the matrix of one's recital and would hold it up—extend a finger—"thank you . . . thank you, I've got as much—all I want—" and leave you with the point of your anecdote on your hands. You consoled yourself with the reflection that he might have perhaps got another "Turn of the Screw" out of your relation of some childish aberration or some more "Spoils of Poynton" from your reminiscence of your old North Country aunt. The rôle of the priest in the confessional, armed with plenary powers, would just have suited him. For, the moment he was bored, all he would have to do would be to say, "Go, my daughter, go in peace and sin some more."

Nobody bored him—he took care of that. One lady—his hostess in Albert Gate Mansions—whose name, a good name, ran to two syllables, was dismissed almost at once. Her recital, whatever it was, was not pregnant of copy. . . . "This is all very interesting, Miss Grib," shortening her name as well as her anecdote. . . .

I learned in time not to mind. I didn't care what I said. I used to enjoy shocking him. He had set me up as the Medusa-head by which he envisaged the less refined happenings of life. I was the weak prop by whose help he made his little cautious descents into reality, the Purple Patch, the violet ray in his so pure spectrum. I don't believe that in all his days he ever came nearer to passion—to the stark human nature of things as that time when I tried to force him down into the arena to fight for me. I ought to have known better. I had had a hint. Once I mentioned a dead friend whom I had loved very much—and I actually used the word of awe in his connection. It was at breakfast in Lamb House. H. J. left his poached egg on cereals and, rising with a little nervous cough, courteously drew my attention to the picture of his mother which hung over the sideboard!

It became rather a joke in academic circles to crab Henry and his dread of fracas of all sorts. In the presence of Walter Raleigh and a select party at Mrs. Prothero's I bragged of my latest invitation to Lamb House for the week-end, adding fatuously, "He says in the letter telling me the trains that he is looking forward to forty-eight hours of my society."

Walter Raleigh ruminated. "Surely? . . . I am counting. . . . A week-end, you say, beginning at five on Saturday to tea-time on Monday? That would practically entail beds in the same room, would it not? Otherwise you would hardly get the forty-eight hours in, would you?"

I think Henry's ears must have often burned for he was particularly careful about the malign and sensitive tympanums of Rye and wished to afford no opportunity of gossip. It was bruited already—I saw the letter—that "Mr. James was seen driving about the marsh yesterday in a victoria with a lady in a purple veil." That was, indeed, I. I wore this ridiculous encumbrance to keep my hair tidy and a purple coat to match, and a purple pillow for my back. That was why he called me the Purple Patch.

But, in spite of these deterrents, he always proposed valiantly to meet me at the station, in some such words as these:

"I shall be there—remarkably much there—by which I mean that the purpose and connection of my being there will be much remarked. We must face that."

And then, his *lettre de digestion* often preceding mine:

My dear Violet. . . . I thank you very kindly for your so *gentille* little letter meanwhile—following your so *gentille* little visit, which much comforted and refreshed my aged spirit. I think it was very nice indeed, and we shall both, till the next time again, sooner than by that other long gap, rejoice in the memory of it—I follow you with due keenness of attention, but not a shred of envy, in your instant plunge into the London whirlpool; out of which, swimming hard, you bring C. G. and Mrs. G. in your teeth to me, like a charming retriever or frisky Newfoundland (in a purple bathing dress). But, oh, no, I won't dine the least little bit with Mrs. G. or with anyone in

London ever, *ever* any more—so help me (*not* Violet Hunt). Our next dinner together must be here, and I am yours all faithfully and unsocially, Henry James.

C. G. was Cunninghame Graham and his dear dead wife.

He coquetted with the society he had left, came up to town and gave a lecture at the old Sesame Club in Dover Street. I was strenuously bidden to support him—by sitting on the platform. He made a tremendous fuss about his ancients . . . it was all nonsense—he really was a grand old man. There was not a trace of nervousness about him, he was as composed, as cool, as cheeky I will say, as any professional. Genius can make these wonderful breaks while protesting incompetency just for the form and fun of it.

There is such a thing as the co-relation of forces and this effort did leave him weak; these protests were sincere, these moral faintnesses, by the way, showed the physical demand that a single dip into public life was apt to make on the power which he was carefully husbanding.

My dear Violet.

Since you kindly ask me I boldly, even brutally, reply: “No, I *don’t* go out to supper—it’s a proceeding, in all the current London conditions (I mean of the Berkeleys, Carltons, Cecils, Princes, and *tutti quanti*;) that I have utterly forsworn and unspeakably abhor.” There you are for a civil answer and I would go to the stake on it. I’ve done them all, and abjured them all, and when last summer I was entrapped into that hideous “midnight sun” of the Carlton electric glare, lighting *green* women and thrusting one into the pillory of a kind of livid distinction (you see it’s my complexion and faded beauty I’m thinking of) I swore my mighty oath, “No more, no more!” Besides, I shall think it, even with you and Mrs. Mond, whom I perfectly remember, and remember liking very much, an anticlimax to my exquisite lecture. Let us have no anticlimax, but only the grand climax of the said lucubration itself, followed by my prompt retirement to virtuous slumber. The Adelphi Leads, or what-

ever they are called, *tant que vous voudrez*, but all *diurnally* and not at the cat-like hours—that will beautifully do. It would not be impossible some day *there*?

(The Adelphi Leads stood for 10 Adelphi Terrace, the New Reform Club where I entertained weekly).

But though he would not “dance the devil’s dance of London” he still must hear, must know . . . this Gossip of Ages, this dear Old Man of the Sea, waiting to be fed with *on dits*, salted almonds, plums of scandal from the universal table of Society where I still very much sat.

And he gathered unto himself—*pour ses beaux yeux*, I think—a better fount of gossip even than I, whom he had been pleased to constitute his social and literary pandar. And didn’t he complain of her while lapping her talk up, triturating no doubt, truncating *ad lib.* but profiting as he alone knew how, while walking shamefaced with an Egregious Lady about the links of Rye.

I have alluded already to the divine Henriette, monstrous, indiscreet, draggle-tailed and draggle-minded yet with some wit and heart of gold, and the crony—there is no better word for it—of such apparent discrepant as Oscar Wilde and the late Lord Leighton. Henriette dropped in, she told us, pretty frequently one spring at Leighton House and had a cup of tea with the President of the Royal Academy, on the eve of his sudden visit to America in 1895. He used, she said, to talk to her quite freely, telling her *des choses* intimate and *inouïes* about himself. About himself they certainly must have been for Sir Frederic was chivalrous and no gossip and never discussed anybody and that was why he made such an admirable President—making up rows, not incurring them, distilling honey, not vinegar—and asking all his brother artists to an exquisite dinner about once a month. Henriette even conveyed to me the idea that she sat to him but I do not believe it. Her “*impasto*” would be too muddied, her “*contours*” too faulty. I almost think she must have made up some of the very remarkable conversations she repeated to us, or perhaps the courtly gentleman was, metaphorically, pulling her leg—a very stout leg it was, like that of my

French *bonne* which I was once slapped for describing as *frées* walking. She had nice, fat French fingers, too. . . .

But nobody minded her—they rather loved her—she added a very pleasant *piment* to those old Victorian tea-parties where most people were careful and didn't even *tell* the things they *knew* to be true. She was a great friend of the Wilde family and was very amusing about Oscar. One summer she was invited to stay with him in his *villeggiatura* at Goring-on-Thames. Queer, she said it was, but interesting! A certain ceremony was observed "even in the abyss," as Ruskin would have said. She arrived with her rusty black trunk that spoke of foreign travel and the string bag that always gave her the air of a French cook out marketing. She said that the little kitchen garden wicket was opened for her by the boy butler who told her that "Mr. Wilde was somewhere in the grounds." This functionary was clad in a blue plush costume with silver buttons and, when not "buttlings," minded the pigs, Guinea pigs.

Henriette and Alice Corkran were the daughters, I believe, of an Irish journalist whose job took him to live in Paris, close to where the old Brownings lived. Young Browning, the son, was always nice to Henriette who also enjoyed his soberer confidences. Indeed, he seems to have preferred the talkative, slightly disreputable-seeming sister to the chaste one who lisped and, though she edited—a novelty in those days—a woman's paper, kept herself to herself. Neither of the sisters was good-looking. Henriette was fond of going to fancy-dress balls as Madame de Staël, the famous *belle laide*, whom I do think she slightly resembled. She ought to have gone as a Scaramouche. I believe she had met young Fred-eric Leighton and his sister, Alexandrina (Mrs. Orr), at the same time as the Brownings in her mother's salon. She was *persona grata* at Mrs. Orr's receptions, where I "poured out" every Tuesday for a good many years.

I seem always to have "poured out." Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton began it and she had Fridays. In this way I saw and heard a great many wonderful people *en valet de chambre*, which means, that offering unregarded the cup of cheer to two persons who know you not, but whom you know, one picks up enough

to compensate for the snub of having empty teacups absently handed to one by Celebrities while continuing their conversation.

Henriette wrote several volumes of memoirs but they were not nearly as good as her conversation and her best things did not get into print. She was especially naughty about "Mr. Browning" and used to be called to order by Mrs. Orr, at whose feet the poet, in spite of duchesses, stayed to the last although she chaffed him blind. And, strange antithesis—Browning suffered her gladly because she had known his wife.

One cannot always say No when the victim stands ready and vulnerable on the floor of a small drawing-room and the request for an introduction is loudly and unmistakably preferred. I believe that I am responsible for making the divine one known to Henry James for he wrote to me in Paris after one of my visits to Rye: "You have left me a nice heritage. The terrible Henriette has come and gone—a pestilence from which I have scarcely recovered." And again, "the net of Armida, otherwise the divine Henriette, once let loose on me, has so filled me with the madness of fear that I haven't known what I was about and everything has fallen more or less to pieces."

She seems to have come upon him in full force, waylaying the train at Camber, in the middle of the plain—no shelter anywhere from the beady black eyes of this *Corinne de nos jours* for the shy bulk of Henry. "She accompanied me with sweet inexorability all the way home and to my shy hermitage"—Lambs are shy. And again—and again she did it till I think he weakened in his defence, the natural kindness of his nature aiding and abetting and a little author's vanity!

"What a fat-faced, twaddling, harmless Henriette, suggesting an unfrocked nun—though literally unfrocked I should scarcely like to see her . . ."

Yes, she made her way into his quasi-affection by process of battering and gleefully came and told us all about it. And he told me all about it when the experience was over.

"I have been in receipt of about a letter a day from the prowling lady and she has literally dined with me (not alone) and had tea with me (also in company, thank goodness!) at the golf club."

How far from the old days when the first lady reporter—was it Lady Colin Campbell?—connoted Henry James's presence at a Private View,—“with the fair and frail Miss Smalley—chaperoning himself!”

The third member, as I will call him, of the South Coast Triumvirate, H. G. Wells, did not come to the office much either—at least, I never saw him there. The editor he “knew at home,” riding over from Sandgate to Aldington on his bicycle and getting a drink of the mead which the editor brewed according to the best mediæval recipes. How often have I heard the story of H. G.'s profound appreciation of a glass of it—his foolish request for a second—the mounting of his bicycle—the wanton wave of the hand—the nettly ditch bed till morning. It may be true. I am sure Mr. Wells will not care to contradict it.

The editor had many “ploys” besides his job of writing novels and poetry. When he was not engaged in making his friends tipsy he would talk to old men in the village and old women—the immortalised “Meary” of Bonnington. He would sit up all night to see the ghost at Aldington Knoll, or cycle over to Rye to call on the Master or the cranky Stephen Crane. On rainy days he looked across at France and wrote wonderful poetry about it. A beautiful life! Why did he abandon it for the mud flats of Notting Hill, the rows of Victorian villas turned into shops, the stress, financial and otherwise, the many-peopled office, the agitating coming and going. . . .

Our mutual passion for women's suffrage was a lien between the editor and me, and the day came when I was called upon to collect funds for the Cause. Miss May Sinclair and myself were drafted off to hold collecting-boxes for three whole days in High Street Station. We were to pick up our wooden boxes at a stay-shop near by. The woman there had kindly consented to keep them against our appearance at three o'clock, but she was very anxious for us to shut the door, hide the boxes under our cloaks, and keep them there till we got out of the shop, lest she lost custom through her favouring of the suffragettes. The arcade that led up to the station was not, at that time, a gay panorama of ladies' hats, but a bare expanse on either side like the walls of a tank and perhaps that

aided the terrible impression that was ours when, by concerted arrangement, May and I flashed our boxes out. Much has been said of our heroism in "standing outside to beg," and I fancy she felt as I did—as if we had suddenly been stripped naked, with a cross-sensation of being drowned in a tank and gasping for breath. We had asked all our friends and editors and readers to come and cheer us up as we stood there pilloried, and they backed us up splendidly. Mr. John Galsworthy sauntered along and tipped us immeasurably and gallantly, and Mr. Laurence Housman and Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer—everyone in fact, who wished the movement well.

One friend of mine conspicuously stayed away and I did *not* for that draw the attention of my militant friends to the fact of his absence so that, accumulating venom, they would come one day to slash his portrait by Sargent to ribbons on the very walls of the Academy. My hands were, of course, tied in those days and, anyway, I was never in favour of a policy of pin pricks. Violent methods were all right. They had to be.

As early as 1909 I had tried to make Henry James sign a petition in favour of Woman's Rights as they were called then, and, full of the German war scare, he answered me by letter:

"No, I confess, I am not eager for the *avènement* of a multitudinous and overwhelming female electorate—and don't see how any man in his senses *can* be! I am eager at present only for Dreadnoughts and Aeroplanes and people to *man*, not to *woman*, them! But *qu'a cela ne tienne!*"

Later on came the terrible Albert Hall Meeting, when a girl near me suddenly slashed out with a whip and cut the face of the steward, and that of one of my friends who was trying to silence or carry her out. Mrs. Meynell and Mrs. C. F. G. Masterman and I, all three ardent for the Cause, sat in a box and wept to see our friends so mauled in the arena below—Miss Evelyn Sharp hustled, and Mr. Henry Nevinson carried out by three stewards as stiff as if he was being levitated, while Mr. Lloyd George, friendly too, dabbing his eternal handkerchief to his mouth, was on principle not permitted to speak. I, unfortunately, had friends in both camps. I went to a party of Mrs. Godfrey Benson's, and

two suffragettes preceded me upstairs to where Dorothea stood beside Mr. Asquith. I heard the usual slogan, "Votes for Women," and I have been told that my hostess blew a police whistle which she had concealed somewhere about her person, but I did not hear it. The two offending ladies were kindly escorted downstairs by Mr. William Woodhouse, and given a nice supper—unknown, I suppose, to his hostess. But I said something to Mr. Asquith, as in duty bound, when I shook hands:

"I say, why don't you give it us?"

And he smiled as he always did when tackled on this subject, as he smiled—nay, laughed—when, at Lady Pearson's, some wag fastened our chairs together at supper with a dinner napkin.

In December, after many and many a contretemps, the first number of the *English Review* actually came out, and Hardy's wonderful poem, which fronted it, had already fluttered the dove cotes of Fleet Street! Mr. Hardy, approached humbly by the editor, sent the poem in, begging him to feel under no obligation to print it—that if he had the slightest doubt or dislike of it he was to return the MS. and he "would not feel hurt." An editor who knew not what he did had refused it though he, personally, liked it—but his review circulated among Young People. Hardy modestly opined that "with a larger morality, the guardians of Young People would see that it was the very thing to lay before their charges." Of course, the treatment was absolutely moral and "the crime one of growing prevalence." Mr. Hardy added that "the false shame which led to the crime was produced by the hypocrisy of the age!" He was still smarting from the carpings and quiblets of reviewers who objected to the sub-title of *Tess*—"A Pure Woman." Gentleman in literature as he was—and is, thank God,—he offered the editor a shorter poem "of a quite ordinary and safe kind." And for the sum of . . . oh, a mere song—practically nothing! I must not, *en* sub-editor, reveal Mr. Hardy's prices, especially as they ruled very low for a great, whole-souled venture like this of *The E. R.*

Morals were still as they were before the war. "Improper"—that word of horror and awe—could still be applied by serious

critics to a masterpiece which described, surely in the most moving stanzas ever penned, the feelings of a mother who finds that, in all innocence, she has murdered her daughter "uncalled for" by administering one of those home-brewed potions commonly used for her purpose in our sophisticated countryside. And *Tono Bungay*—where I figure, so he advised me, as Beatrice, the pert, aristocratic lure of the enquiring, pathetic, and pushful Wells boy who was the hero.

And to celebrate the birth of the Review, I suppose, there was a Yuletide festival lasting nearly a week, according to the manner of the ancients, at Holland Park Avenue—plum puddings, Yule logs, chestnut-roasting and snapdragon; orgies of stickiness, and Father Christmas's beard getting entangled in the candle sconces. A letter was dictated to me for Stephen Reynolds, to tell him that the children and Fräulein were coming up, and that if he'd "like to come, a nice little bed would be made up for him on the leads," for the children would monopolise the best bedroom—their fond father would bestow his length in the cubicle. That was the sort of privation he never minded. The plank bed at Brixton was doubtless no harder, so Elizabeth Schultz told me, than the bed at 84 that was hers later, and she took all the drawing-room cushions to mollify it.

This reception Conrad had proposed to attend if he could put a boot on and "scrape up the shillings for his fare." I don't know if he came, for I was not invited to this so exclusively young party, though I attended the one later in Christmas week, which was for grown-up people, the children having been put to bed early. I was mindful of that, and as I and my niece went up to the dining-room to take off our cloaks, past their door, I said to her:

"Don't talk. The children are asleep."

Two voices shouted in crushing juvenile contempt:

"Oh, no, we're *not*!"

I don't know why they were sent to bed, because we grown-ups were made to play the most childish of games—Clumps, Honey-pots, not stopping short at Hunt-the-slipper. I know we all seemed to be sitting on the floor—Mr. Belloc—or wasn't he?

V. H., the Radford girls, Mrs. Garnett and her boy, who has lately won three prizes with his *Lady into Fox*. There was no one to curb the editor and his German instinct for games. Wonderful paper frogs that raced, and other mechanical toys that seemed, but were not, perhaps, unworthy of a great mind unbending, and the Review was launched.

The Good Editor—Manuscripts in the Coalbin—Mr. Chandler's gorged Rabbits—The Flowering of D. H. Lawrence—The Futurist Poison Bottle—The Proposal—"Will you—if?"—"The long, long fight"—Accept—The Beauty and Professor Ker—Selsey—"Blood upon the buttercups"—Beauty ministers to Genius—"The most unselfish man in the world"—The Eternal Error—Women cannot Save—A False Assumption—A Bid for Happiness—Neck or Nothing—Importation of Elizabeth Schultz—With Thomas Hardy to Aldeburgh—Ghost Stories at Edward Clodd's—Professor Gilbert Murray and Mrs. Belloc Lowndes—The "coon" singer at Harrington Mann's—The Vampire Review—The Editor and Beauty's Mother—Sheringham and Aubrey Beardsley's Sister—The first Lawyer's letter—Cranford in Normandy—Home—Too Good to be Careful—Charing Cross—The Angry Goddess—Appearances—Parallel with Violet Fane—The author of "Isabel Carnaby" and Mr. Parnell's Drain Pipe.

I SEEMED to myself, by 1909, to have become quasi-mistress of that office and all the strands of its business, even the details of its housekeeping passing through my willing but inapt fingers. The editor, the best editor, *quâ* editor, that has ever been, seemed like a babe unborn in the guiding of mere worldly matters. Time and space were nothing to him, except when it was a matter of proofs and printing. And then he drove both printers and compositors wild. Anyone could "do" him, and for the present, I think, did not, respecting the pathetic inefficiency of the great man, except when he had a pen in his hand.

He seemed like an infant in charge of a motor-car, living in a home that was not a home, but the shell merely of his great venture, uncomfortable, inadequate for all special needs, and yet forced by his will to maintain them. About it there was, of course, no trace of feminine daintiness, except for Hermosa who with her own fair hands tidied up, dusted, and swept the room where she worked, and sometimes even filled the coal-scuttle. But she went away early, and some days did not come at all. Needless to say, the editor preferred to sit in the cold rather than get fuel out of

the yard himself. He was said to take the electric lamp to bed with him by way of a hot-water bottle. As for his meals, his Mrs. Miller was fond of buying ironclads of fat, slices of cooked ham from the neighbouring pork-butcher's, slabs of parchment called piecrust, for her master's lunch, so that, for the most part, he preferred to feed, and take his friends to feed, in the little back room of the pastrycook's next door.

Tall, haggard, patient, and urbane, coughing and eating his heart out! That was the effect he produced on my little niece, who, with more of motherly instinct than I, used to go in and take away the linen and socks to mend, and buy him hot-water bottles that he never filled.

I found myself, without exactly knowing how it had come about, to have adopted with her the dangerous vocation of "minding," mending, and consoling a genius by day, while by night, even, our time was not our own.

I had got my mother to have the new telephone installed at home and an extra switch in my bedroom, and so incurred the plague of being wakened in the dead of night by what H. G. Wells in *Boon* calls the editor's "languid, plangent tenor," bewailing his literary woes, insinuating, indicating misery on the electric current that, like Swinburne's stream, has come to be the vehicle for all the misery under the sun and must be a constant picnic for curious operators. He would describe with eloquence the occurrence of what Pearl Craigie used to call "quagmires," literary and household—the misdeeds of Mr. Collinson the compositor, and Mr. Chandler, the landlord—two powers that were—proofs not to hand, and Quarter Day. . . .

Mr. Chandler, vestryman, greengrocer, fish-salesman, fruiterer and poulterer, and caterer for the Grosvenor Gallery Restaurant, who lived below, looked like a good old English gentleman and behaved like a family butler to his tenant, to whom, for form's sake, he was constantly giving notice and as constantly withdrawing it. I think his "Fair," as he called his large, handsome, and stout wife, had a *tendresse* for the quiet, patient and long-suffering literary gentleman upstairs, and flew to cash cheques for him at a

moment's notice. But of course the Chandler *ménage* had to live, and did, very well.

The moment the Review was started the usual concourse of friends, contributors, and would-be contributors attended the editor's levees. He was out for new blood—for talent if not for genius. He printed, so I believe, the first articles of Norman Douglas, Gilbert Cannan, Wyndham Lewis, and D. H. Lawrence.

That *was* a Moment! The first blush—the blowing—of Mr. Lawrence's flower of genius. I was, at that time, reader. The editor handed me some manuscript poems written in pencil and very close, which had come to him from a young schoolmistress in the Midlands. She said that her sweetheart was schoolmaster in the same school. He was the son of a miner, and not very strong, but she had copied out some of his poems, and would the editor give them a glance?

They were perfectly wonderful. The editor was beside himself with pleasure at his discovery. Hermosa typed them, and they went in in chunks. Letters were exchanged, and the young poet, bored and weary of his life, teaching at Addiscombe, called at the office. He was very like a board-school boy grown to man's estate. He had the head of a child—the yellow hair with a “feather” at the back, much as if a school-mate had been having a game with it. His eyes, if I mistake not, were very blue, his lips very red, and his face very white—sinisterly so, for he looked consumptive.

His manner was gentle, modest, and tender, in a way I did not associate with his upbringing. His father was a “butty man,” of a certain rank among miners, and I found that he, his sisters, and his sweetheart met every Saturday evening round the fire to read Verlaine and Baudelaire, while commissioned not to allow his mother's loaves to burn in the oven. He was more conversant with decadent poetry than I or the editor, and that is saying a great deal, in fact, I think he had studied it too deeply.

I was in the habit of bringing to my mother's house anyone who was likely to amuse her; and who but interesting people wrote for the Review? One day when dear Byles, the editor's best friend, and to be mine, had just got back from Japan, D. H. Law-

rence brought his fiancée to lunch. She was like a brown bird, bright-eyed, her little head covered with curling russet locks like feathers. Obviously, when at home, a dashing young party. Here she was obviously nervous, but pulled it off all right, though there was a snag when she turned the russet head and asked my maid, who was handing the potatoes, in a speaking whisper whether she should keep her gloves on. I never saw her again, but I had a great deal of correspondence with her, and she consulted me about the publication of her own book, counter-blast to her ex-sweet-heart's version of the part played by *Miriam*. The manuscript has, I believe, never been published, and I cannot think why—perhaps because she is happily married!

After the *English Review* was well started in January the editor's courts were thronged socially. One never knew what social figure or other would be suddenly and secretly bitten with the lust of authorship. And the Review was "It," as Mr. Wells had foretold. The editor gave parties—I lent my maid and spoons, or he hired the ex-butler of Sir Frederic Leighton, who had ushered in Queen Victoria to see the President of the Royal Academy. In the afternoons the office-drawingroom was filled with what Mr. Douglas Sladen used to designate on his invitations as "pretty women and brainy men." Many of the women were political—Lady Barlow and Lady Low. Present were Sidney Brooks, Perceval Gibbon, Hilaire Belloc, the Garnetts, some of the Wertheimer sisters, the Rosetti girls, my beautiful school-fellow, Agnes Grove, who always told me she had sat to Mr. Hardy for "Tess." . . . There was the first Lady St. Davids, the handsome Jewess, and there was Christabel Pankhurst, looking like a young and pretty Queen Victoria.

For the men, I have already specified them, but I have forgotten Baerlin, most faithful of friends. There was handsome Miss Ada Potter, who thought so highly of the dramatic possibilities of *The Fifth Queen Crowned* that she put it on for one day at the Kingsway, herself playing Queen Catherine Howard, and getting to support her, Hearn, the living image of Henry VIII in the picture.

Only, like Cinderella's pumpkin carriage and its mice footmen,

all this glory vanished at dusk, and the editor was left with a few broken sandwiches and half cups of tea, with which nothing could be done till morning, sitting by his dying fire and an empty coal-scuttle that he was too lazy to go out and replenish, or thumping his piano and shouting, "Madam, will you walk?" for his own dreary amusement and company. Mrs. Chandler, in her room below, who pitied him, has often told me this.

I am not implying that the editor was friendless. His mother and his sister and Russian brother-in-law, who had been a member of the first Duma and twice imprisoned for a term of years in Peter and Paul, used to come now and then. His cousins, the Rossetti girls, sometimes paid him a visit, but I don't think old William Rossetti ever came or that the editor ever went to him. I think that the editor had borrowed too many of his rare books and forgotten to return them.

A cheerful girl was his sister-in-law, Mary Martindale, who shared a flat with his mother in Blythe Road. She was beautiful in a simple way, like clear water and primroses, had a ringing laugh which she used very often, rather like the cuckoo's note, a raw call of earliest spring, of which she reminded me. The Martindales were a very handsome family. Dr. Martindale looks like a Spanish grandee. And there was Hermosa, handsome and cheerful too. But naturally these ladies cleared off about six o'clock.

There was another *habituée* who paid her visits chiefly in the evenings. I do not know how she occupied herself in the day—manicuring her nails, I think! She was of the lazy, Slav type, a protégée of the editor, and she called him "Păpă."

He had rescued her in some sort of way, so I made out from his romantic disquisitions on Elizabeth Schultz. He was, like other romantics, tainted with the lust of rescue-work, and he had picked up this young person in the Empire lounge, and had suggested to her that she should come and be respectable. He always said that she was the thirteenth to whom he had made this proposition. This particular girl agreed. He had been drawn to her by the queerest notion—that the soul of his first-born who died had, somehow or other, found its way into her body. She was

gentle, shy, faint . . . innocuous, like a flake of tarnished snow; her white, heavy moon-face, with its short Calmuck nose, wide red mouth, and loops of black hair falling over a rather brutish forehead, spoke of her Tartar descent. She came from Königsberg.

I had not then his confidence, but it seemed to me that, during the long-delayed tarrying of Spring that occurred that year, when fogs lasted well into March and April, that the Hand of the Lord lay heavy on the editor of the *English Review* in some way. It might have been the journal, which was going very well, but was costing its founder his life's blood in the way of money. Already there had been talk of making it into a company, and I think the German backers and relations were being invited to put more money into it. I heard talk of Uncle Friedrich and Aunt Antonia. Heavy interest was being paid on their loans . . . there may have been gifts. . . .

Or it might have been the suddenly provoked quarrel with his beloved Marwood which was affecting the editor's feelings as well as the future of the Review. He had been unkind to Marwood, and had visited what might have been want of tact, or even grave failure of discretion, on a faithful adherent "with Olympian severity," so his mentors warned him. "You seem to have done some crushing!" was Conrad's opinion. Poor Marwood was a nervous man, full of feeling, but not endowed by nature with the means of letting off steam possessed by the two doyens of the pen. "*Un galant homme tout bonnement!*" so Conrad, the great, the generous, nobly testified—even in the moment of petty irritation that drew from him nervous stagy phrases, admiring this wondrous dog-like attachment of the English country gentleman.

Marwood was a mathematician, a philosopher, an economist. Perhaps he was too clever to look for, too simple to realise, the capacity for petty jealousies implicit in the psychology of these great *névroses*, the incidence of that earnest regard—virile, strong, permanent, vitiated by storms and misunderstandings—which men of the same *métier*, which is their unique preoccupation, come to have for one another, and which is far more causative of quarrels than

any which may subsist between man and woman. Marwood, in his noble simplicity, was caught between two deeply sophisticated personalities, and went about looking ill and unhappy. It is ill meddling between two of a trade, two with the diapason set alike and evened in a common endeavour.

Oh, these weird nervous systems of writers, harassed by the lust of production, their sensibilities sharpened, their powers of perception duplicated and reduplicated, like the lens of the biggest telescope in the world, that a cloudy night yet will render useless, how they suffer! And how determined they are in their moments of sanity to "keep out of things"—other people's things! Other people's sex complications especially. Mentors they may like to be; as mentors they may be adopted, but with our affairs of the heart they prefer to have nothing to do, except to listen and gather copy, perhaps. An advisory board for Ethics or Behaviour—yes, but even Henry James, the precise and old-fashioned, refused to moralise on or connect in any way Morals with the perplexing, irrational, untidy passion of Love.

Once as I have said I was so rash as to speak *tout rond* of Love by name to Henry James and got, sweetly enough, snubbed. As for Conrad, he got quite cross when once, *en tête-à-tête*, I invited him to take some interest in that sort of thing for my sake. He spoke to me just as he used to speak to the editor, asking, with lifted eyebrows and savage twist of the upper lip: "What object, what purpose, could be served by the creation of equivocal situations—juggling with the realities of life?" That was just what Love was, and nothing else, the creator of equivocal situations. Art was the only reality of life. He himself did not go in for love-affairs, except of course, the master affair of all. He did not envisage the fact, I suppose, that other literary existences, imagining themselves capable of including more than one, are ruined by the swelter entailed by plurality of emotions.

It was never any use asking him to take sides, to speak to this or that person, to engineer *raccommodements*. The very atmosphere of arrangement and possible compromise seemed terrible to him: "I can't breathe in situations that are not clear." He abhorred plots and suspicions; "They are neither in my nature, my



JOSEPH LEOPOLD

tradition, or my experience." "Happy man!" I said. "No, I am not *fine* enough for them," he maintained whose work it was to create situations, not unravel them—especially in his society *intime*; and with a lovely shrug and a smile, as of an infant at bay, he murmured:

"We are just a pair of silly·innocents."

So they were. So are all the devoted men and women who work and have their being in the world of ideas, using human substance merely as a dummy to hang theories on, to demonstrate world philosophy, world truths. . . . The first author was a savage who set up to exemplify his notion of causation by an Old Man with a white beard, calling him God the Father, and figuring the brooding Spirit as the white bird of meekness.

The worst of it is that authors will not live like Simeon Stylites, but will have relations gathered round them, and instead of posing on a nice quiet pillar, go to live in the country for peace. Peace! Village life, as I have found it, always means less peace than a sword. The white geese on village greens cackle, the village grocer gossips, the timid, derelict female souls for whom London fight is too much make up for the want of a circulating library by Many Inventions. . . . And so we get poor Conrad complaining bitterly of the usual thing, to most of us, here, there, and everywhere. Village *potins*, three-cornered rows, wigs upon the green or on the marsh. And he in Ham Street is all spikes at once, and his friend a mush of indecision and dyspepsia in London. He objects to be warned of "tensions in certain quarters," of "intrigues (*vulgo*: lies)." But when is there not tension in village communities? He takes refuge in proverbial palliatives. No, nobody is as black as he is painted. He won't give up anybody to please anybody. Poor Marwood calls, looking very ill. "He won't live long!" so Conrad, with the ground-swell of irritation still on him, says cruelly. And the Review loses a good backer. And *Alles ist hin* for a time at 84. It is even insinuated that it is my fault. Genius is ever saying, "*P'accuse.*" That is its privilege.

I granted that privilege, for just then I too was singing very small. Things were "riding" me, too. And I had just heard of

the death, far away in Switzerland, of such a one as we women, roughly, and tenderly speaking, choose to call "the only man we have ever loved." Also, my uncle had just died in his house a few yards away from the office. I was with my aunt a great deal, and I had to attend her at the funeral in the dreary church in Kensington Park Road, where the music is in the Gregorian mode, than which there is no greater assault on the emotions. Even a dog, listening to it, will howl. And I knew what it would be like, and, prepared to proffer some obscure reason or other, I rushed into the office of the *English Review* on my way there, in my unaccustomed black, for what ends, to quote Conrad, God only knew. To gain comfort from the editor's aloofness, perhaps! I got my comfort, but it was cold, a reach-me-down, for there was a cab at the door and the luggage being taken off, and I found the children there with Miss Edmée Van De Noot, and so appropriative of their father that not a word could I get from him. He looked a different man for the moment.

We had got some idea of comforting each other for the slings and arrows of literary fate, at least that is the way we used to speak of it. He was by way of himself preparing little dinners for one friend or perhaps two. They were *à la Russe*. One evening, when I arrived at half-past six, I found him upstairs in the little kitchen, with his nice Japanese silk dressing-gown over his shabby morning suit to preserve it from the grease of the frying-pan. And, after all, the cutlets were burned. Some meringues from the confectioner's next door followed. He liked sweet things better than I—eternal child that he was! Then we went down, and he began to tell me the plot of his new book he was writing. As he read I looked at him critically. He was no longer so dreadfully thin, since the cough had gone, but he was white like a stick of asparagus grown in a cellar; at any rate, rather pasty. He smoked incessantly, and it made his teeth black. His cuffs wanted "trimming," and I made a note to tell my niece to bring a pair of scissors.

It was rather cold. The light was not good. Shadows were encroaching on the little oasis of light in which we sat, he on a

hideous red plush Victorian arm-chair, the one blot on the room, and I on a *chaise-longue* that an invalid had used. The depression was as one might say of a fog—so thick you could cut it with a knife. He talked of suicide in the intervals of reading, until I could hardly bear it, of having insured his life for a large sum which his children were to get after his death, but if he committed suicide they would not get it. How to manage? He had it all ready. The great 'buses rolling down the hill from Notting Hill Gate went straight past his door—I could hear them as he spoke—and he would throw himself under one of them after having taken poison, and no one would think of having an autopsy of the mangled corpse . . . and so on.

I was distressed, and yet unbelieving. People who talk of suicide are the last persons to commit it. The best thing I could do would be to go home. He would not see me home; he never did, because Elizabeth Schultz always came at twelve for half an hour's talk, to tell him what she had been doing all day and all her little troubles. So he wouldn't be quite alone. It was ten o'clock; I mentioned it, but in my heart of hearts I hated leaving him until she came, though I did not want to meet the girl. I rather deprecated her visits, yet after all it was no affair of mine. Then I suddenly said I was thirsty and he volunteered to get me some lemonade from the dining-room upstairs. "Yes, yes, I'm thirsty," I said, but really I was not. It was some hint from Fate that prompted my request.

Left alone in the room I sat still and wondered what there was for me to do? There was something—some mission, some duty to perform—for someone else's husband! Ridiculous! It wasn't my business. Suppose I just got up and went away. Left the house and ran home? I had forgotten my latchkey, but my maid was sitting up for me, and it was only ten. But another "suppose?" Suppose I came to 84 to-morrow to fetch some more manuscripts to read and Hermosa met me and said that something awful had happened! That talk of suicide—was it meant for me? Was it a cry for help from the intimate thought-reserve of another human being?

There was so little time; it would not take him more than two

minutes to fetch that lemonade, unless indeed he was making it—squeezing lemons. . . .

I had to do something, that was clear to me, but also, no clear plan of action was mine. But I stayed, and when he came down carrying the glass I got up and took it from him and put it on the table.

What can a woman do? There is the old, traditional way of comfort . . . something of the sort . . . I put one hand on the lapel of his coat, using, I think it was, the simple outsider's phrase:

"Don't look so unhappy!"

The other hand, by the will of Providence, stole to the loose, open pocket of the brown velvet jacket that Rossetti had once worn. It fished out a dark, fluted bottle, inscribed in the Futurist colours of danger, POISON. The blunt letters were like the head of a cobra suddenly reared. I took it to the light, and he waited like a condemned criminal.

"Were you?" I said; and he answered, "I was."

"Donkey!" I said, and, keeping the bottle in my hand, sought for my cloak and shouldered it. He said anxiously, "Do you mean to give it me back?"

"No!" I was firm, and, for the first time after one of our dinners, he walked home with me—and it was only half-past ten when all was said and done.

I kept the bottle. I took my niece, whom I shall in future call the Beauty for she was one, a round of visits, and, when we came home, a course of balls. I neglected the *English Review* for her sake. Balls in the city, when we came home in the dawn at five and Fleet Street was full of pigeons waddling about in the depression of the road, where little accidental heaps of provender lay scattered. Suffrage balls, where Professor Ker danced with her like a two-year-old, and while the editor of the *English Review* danced with Christabel Pankhurst, very obtrusively feminine, holding up her long train with a ribbon attached to her wrist in the Victorian method. Visits to different places in England, where, to my niece's delight, the editor, of whom we both had assumed charge, always made an excuse to come too.

She and I were really enjoying a holiday from the *English*



MY NIECE

Review at Selsey when one morning, as I was walking down the High Street, looking towards London, there suddenly appeared a dusty figure, on which everything that should have been black was white, sprinting along towards the address the child had given him. He explained to us that he had won seven pounds in a Derby sweepstake, and had, with his brother-in-law and Bob Woolley, hired a car and set out for the South Coast. Suspiciously near Chichester the car had broken down, and he had escaped. . . .

Well, it was very nice, and all these children—editor, niece, and the Heron Allen babies—played together, and somehow that car did never get mended, or he was never advised that it did, and in the end he sacrificed his share of the return journey and came up by train with us two. Something I said inspired one of the best poems he ever wrote. I was looking out of the window on the fields that run on each side all down the Peninsula, and all at once I screamed from my corner:

“I see blood upon the buttercups!”

The poor Beauty, thinking her aunt had gone mad, crossed over to my side of the carriage to look, but saw only Nature’s set scene that had been provoking her own outcries for the last five minutes—an immense hard, cold, yellow plain of buttercups growing close together, stretching away from the carriage window on both sides to the blue aniline sea, also on both sides, since this was a peninsula. But I—morbid fool!—saw a third primary colour. Flakes and splashes and pools of red lying, as it were, on the yellow pile of a Maple carpet of flowers, as if an army had bled to death on it. . . .

The horror lasted all day, and for days after. To the editor it suggested a poem, but to me sheer ugly disaster of some kind, not to be averted. Always the oiliness, the thickness, the glutinousness of blood appals me when I see it flow, even from a finger. I would never do for a mediæval lady watching a tournament; I could not look on the red-hung lists. Why are they hung with red? Is it so as not to dishearten the combatants by the sight of the blood of fallen knights? In the evening of the next day he read me the poem he had dedicated to me, in the garden opposite, sitting under a smoky, black-boughed may-tree by the light of a London gas-lamp. It was all about a duel . . . two knights . . . two

ladies . . . with an up-to-date tag . . . something about "the long, long fight" that we moderns have to wage, bloodless combats with pens for swords and the lists drawn—not in the open air. . . .

And I, possibly, was still under the influence of this vision the day after, when he made me an astounding, romantic, nonsensical proposition, over the luncheon-table among crumbled bread and smoking Irish stew, speaking in a dead level tone, as if he had simply been saying, "Have some more!"

"Will you marry me if ever I am a divorced man?"

It was an assay in Pre-Raphaelite crudity of expression, as if a Madox Brown heavy oil-painting or an early Elizabeth Siddal water-colour had been suddenly turned into speech and I had nothing better to do than laugh quite nervously and put the question by. He returned to it again, and I got cross. "It was too sudden," as Victorian ladies used to say, and I did not really think he was serious. And, besides, I was thinking at that time—all the time—of a freshly made grave at Clarens.

The pleasant contingency he lightly indicated did not arise. Fate held other modes of making me useful—and miserable. Less facile, more irksome, were to be my ways, and full of the snares and snags that Character lays for us, leading along to unthought-of disaster, and ending in the lonelinesses and futilities of wasted endeavour.

And now, Poor White Rose of Weary Leaf:

I cannot see what pleasures
Or what pains were.

Glad, but not flushed with gladness,
Since joys go by;
Sad, but not bent with sadness,
Since sorrows die. . . .

They do. And one comes to sit by some Border Stream in the Northland such as Swinburne describes, with one's knees drawn up, throwing little tufts of grass into the "wan water" at one's feet and seeing them drift.

Old Loves and faded fears
Float down the stream that hears
The flowing of all men's tears
Under the sky.

Downstairs, sitting in the *chaise-longue*, too big for me, that had been got in for someone else, I listened to the editor, sitting opposite to me in a chair that was far too small for him, as was the way in this topsy-turvy house of art, reading aloud to me his new book, laying down carefully with his fine discriminating hand one typewritten sheet after another as he finished it.

Hypnotised by the voice, inspired by it perhaps, my personality seemed doubled, my intelligence twice as efficient. I was able to think, *sub rosa*, of my own affairs, past, present, and to come, neatly pursuing a separate train of thought while taking in quite intelligently what was being read to me. No discourtesy to the author was involved; I had discovered that his reading was purely subjective, independent of his listener. Also that he disdained criticism or comment of any kind; criticism ran off him like water off a duck's back; comment, even praiseful comment, merely interfered with the psychic flow between himself and the medium of the moment—me. I was attending as much, and no more than, he wished. I was just a sounding-board.

He himself was abundantly psychic. It helped him, like any art that one practises efficiently. While taking a deep interest in me, he took none in my life-history or that of anyone else. But, did he so much as give himself the trouble to think about it, he would find that he knew everything, past, present, and to come. I believe myself that everyone does know all the time, but that the faculty for digging into our reserves of knowledge varies considerably, and, in most people, seems nearly atrophied.

His was certainly not. I have known this heavy man repeat to me, word for word, parts of a conversation held between myself and a soldier friend of his in a cottage parlour in England while he himself was in France. Before the editor returned Major V. died in hospital in England. Telepathy will hardly do; the matter was too unimportant. One explanation would be that, the author in the seer knew precisely what this so ordinary soldier-man was

likely to say to this so ordinary, jealous woman. That would be merely the exercise of his trade. Any author should be able to reconstruct the scene.

But it is uncanny to be linked in some sort to a supernatural being—as it were, the changeling of a nursery tale. Fairies, it is well known, prefer to have their infants brought up by human beings who have got salvation. And the human mothers are naturally annoyed by the wisdom of all the ages that the soulless fairy-child possesses. It happens now and again that the human baby gets stolen away and the fairy's substituted.

A genius must have been the first changeling. So new and so old, so wise and so simple, so innocent and so knowing: a man grown, but remaining, since no one has ever made the sign of the cross over him, the eternal child. And it is but a doubtful privilege of Genius, the retention of this child-mind, giving it, as it were, the simili-best of both worlds, but nothing really of either, which may prove its curse and its ruin. For Genius, like the fabled scorpion when finally cornered, stings itself with its own tail and commits suicide, aghast perhaps at its own inevitable selfishness. Selfishness, ineluctable factor, indispensable, everlasting stoker of the fires of Genius! Selfishness so solid, so extensive, that it transcends the mean little vice we currently speak of as a foible. Selfishness, like the protective colour of animals, the use of which is absolutely necessary for maintenance of the life and efficiency of the quality we admire.

It is selfishness which, at the lowest, makes Germany so strong, so efficient, so tough a customer—Germany, which, at its best, gave us Goethe. The artist-selfishness of Shelley, whose Cloud builds and unbuilds at its wayward pleasure, and laughing at its own cenotaph. Real genius laughs Homerically. I am sure Shakespeare and Ben Jonson laughed well.

Talking of Shelley, Mr. Hudson always said I was hard on him. "Selfishness was not the word for him: a more unselfish being than Shelley never existed," said the downright old man.

And Goneril took exception to the "disembodied spirit business" which had been a nuisance to her at school where she used to be called upon to say in an examination paper what she thought about

"The Skylark" and "The Nightingale" respectively. She was uncertain then but when she had come to woman's estate she was "quite sure Shelley wasn't a disembodied spirit at all—why, he had proposed calmly to take two women abroad with him at once! Oh, yes, he was human all right!"

That is perhaps the *rationale* of all these attempts to afford special protection to the sexual aberrations of Poets.

No, one cannot really quarrel with the deep, implicit selfishness of Nature who, whatever the poet may say, *does* betray the heart that loves her. You cannot live without betraying—even the animals you eat; you certainly cannot create without driving some pitiful human being or other into a decline.

I put him off then quite easily—found some *mot juste* or other, and he subsided for the time.

Much later I subscribed to his plans. The plangent, languid, tenor "voice" overcame my north-country sensibleness, hypnotised me into folly, as it was meant it should do. He returned to the charge, politely, pertinaciously. . . . I was moved more by what I saw and guessed of his circumstances than by his arguments—though, indeed, he did hold out tremendous prospects of mutual help and avail. The literary world, an oyster which two persons of Good Will could easily open and make so much of for themselves and others—by means of the great *English Review*!

Literature, which actually exists for itself, like a non-tied public house, always hangs out this flattering bush. The vague advertisement of philanthropy covers unconsciously the fine egoism of the artist who works for the pleasure and vanity of making and is properly paid only in appreciation, although the fleshpots, such as a red brick palace and a title, are not ungrateful to him. This is demonstrable by the fact that the artist, even if he is not paid either way, mostly goes on being an artist, a plain "Mr.," and lives in a garret. No real artist is lured permanently to slipshodness by the prospect of red brick palaces, etc. The pursuit of literature is more like acting than people think, for the hands that are lifted, the applause that dies down as soon as a newer sensation comes along and wipes out his Moment, is all the artist-actor cares for,

really. It represents his immediate effect on the subject of an experiment—for every book is an experiment—some made on *corpus* very *vile*, when the effort is made to get just a laugh or a popular success.

His miserable household got on my nerves. I deeply desired to put an end to this state of things. Even as we sat on this foggy, windy night in June, I heard the saturnine creak of the standard something or other recently installed by Mr. Chandler on the roof which didn't work, which had fetched loose, and might any moment fall through and crush us as we sat. The editor was too lazy to complain and have it taken away. The window on the north over the dusty, papery garden would not shut tight. I didn't at all like the feeling of the outer door on to the street always open. . . . Supposing someone were to take it into his head to walk up—walk in? An Azef or a Vera F.?

And the people about the house, all excepting nice Hermosa, coming in in the morning like a breath of warm air from a kitchen where an aproned, rosy-cheeked woman had been baking, smelling somehow like new-made bread. But the cook here was a day woman, the kitchen was a cubicle, with room for nothing but things that had got thrown away behind the stove. Mrs. Miller was a nice, clean old body, but terribly inefficient, and a gossip. God knows what tales she took about, judging from those she brought to us. Her egregious surmise about the niece, delivered to my maid who came down now and again to bring spoons and lay smart cloths for a party: "Which of them is it? The young or the old one?" And the funny little barber who came every day and made the room temporarily into a shaving saloon. He earned his living by perambulating the hill and shaving two other Campden Hill worthies, Mr. Alexander, of Aubrey House, and Mr. Rawlinson, both collectors of Whistlers, Rembrandts, and Alfred Hunts, and both friends of my father. It was naturally rather an expensive way of being "barbed." The debility of the domestic arrangements, the enormous coming and going for which no provision was made! Clean sheets for Mr. Marwood . . . where? A bath towel . . . but the bath wouldn't work always. The periodical

irruption of commanding, dogmatic children—Shes who must be Obeyed—with their foreign governess. And, implicit in the household, though I hardly ever saw her, another foreigner, the pale, pasty-faced Elizabeth Schultz, bored, pining, discontented, dying to get away, with nowhere else to go . . . wanting luxury, gaiety, new clothes . . . always leaving paper patterns and powder-puffs about the room.

All this purely domestic disorder was irritating to my north-country, menseful soul. But there were higher grounds for taking a hand. It was represented to me that I might incidentally save a talent, to say the least; save a soul—as I had saved a life. Save something! Not myself, for my life was over, buried in a grave. There was no secret about that, although it was never mentioned.

Women abhor being derelict, the having to face a void, an empty room that will never need to be “turned out” again—the crass sensation of uselessness. If they have been unemployed long enough, they are carried off their feet at once by the possibility of renewed sentimental occupation, a *scène quelconque à faire*, even if it is but a “turn”—not even a “star” one. This is, of course, a desire that no man, except a Communist or a Nihilist, has ever shared with them. Men, even in the tiniest expeditions, are glad enough to leave the bridle on the horse’s neck, to rest on their oars so as to be able to go farther in the day. But women ride headlong; catch crabs, and tire themselves at once. Like men, they are ready enough to fit out an Argo—at someone else’s expense for choice—but, unlike men, contemplate with more equanimity the prospect of leaving their bones on a desert beach in some Company’s service. In fact, give them a chance—only half a chance—and they will make the usual fool of themselves. Not the Newest Woman of all, but I happen to be the New Woman that people wrote about in the nineties.

I was ready to commit the eternal error. I was full, not of Love, but of Loving-kindness, and obsessed by the permanent illusion of all women that they can Save. His friends, Conrad, Marwood, Byles, dear Dollie Radford—had dinned it into me.

But, in fact, Woman has always been powerless to save, and

there is no such thing as Loving-kindness between her and Man. It is bound to be Love, or nothing, with a dash of hate. The sexes are ravening beasts when once you come to brass tacks. And as, in the ancestral poem I have already quoted, "Of Love once sown, who knoweth what the crop is?" if it is an ill one—a crop of dragon's teeth—it is left for Her to reap the dreary harvest. As for salvage, it is well known that the shipwrecked mariner turns against his rescuer; and sailors, wise and primitive men, will let a man drown lest he live to do them an injury.

I was given to understand what was not—was not then and never was to be—but I am sure that the more deeply interested party to the affair had brought himself to the point of believing. Wheedlers—people who can, by the lure of the literary tongue, "kid" the intelligence of others—do invariably possess inordinate powers of self-deception. It takes deep conviction to convince: neat and fine technique to be plausible. As for me, ancillary events pushed to credence, and I was willing to indulge the pleader.

There was not even then the slightest chance of things falling out as he—as I, too, came to wish. I am supposed to have the devil's own luck, having been born on a Sunday, but, in this case, the devil did not fight for his own. And as for the editor, he was born unlucky—and well he knew it, regarding himself as one hated of the high gods. He failed generally, to obtain popular suffrage. "A lack of sympathetic imagination," as one who had the best right to know said of him. He had not the time to use tact. I wonder, did any genius ever?

This was the turning-point as we reckoned it, but the wrong way round. A gross miscalculation. The result, perhaps, of that want of sympathetic imagination on one side and blind adherence on the other. The whole conduct of affairs, so far as one consciously manipulated them, was based on a false assumption. . . . And away we went!

But, "Lord, if I am deceived, it is by Thee," says St. Augustine, and there are also Love's Martyrs "for ever, ever dying," says Calantha in *The Broken Heart*, and dances, dances among the reeling candles of the hall as each messenger of woe comes in and tells her of new deaths and calamities. . . .

I was very busy at this time—looking after my mother, writing a novel, and chaperoning the Beauty through her first season. She was like Romney's portrait of Lady Hamilton—golden hair, dark eyebrows, blue eyes, pink cheeks, and red lips, tall and a little clumsy. Her adorers were many, and, as often happens, of a certain age. Young men do not care for budding innocence. Nor did she. We used to profit by the gaps which the London season allows for refreshment. This Whitsun, we went to Aldeburgh to stay with Mr. Edward Clodd, whose cousin, who entertained for him at these house-parties, was my dearest friend.

We travelled down with Thomas Hardy and Mrs. Belloc Lowndes and a small Persian kitten in a basket, and, though I knew it not till I got to Aldeburgh, the editor and his protégée were in the same train.

You see, the editor of the *English Review* was so busy he could not do without his secretary, even for a week-end. There was quite a tiny scandal, but I thought I knew why he did it; philanthropy, a reckless instinct for kindness that cost him nothing, a desire to give that poor pathetic victim of life a short good time—walks by the sea and so a wholesome appetite. She took them by herself mostly. I managed to get away and walk with her once as far as the golf links, that she pranced over, looking every inch a foreigner, holding up her dress over her ridiculous starched white petticoat . . . afraid of the balls . . . she had never seen links in her life. But she *was* perfectly happy at Aldeburgh, and it made him happier so that later, when he went to stay with the Bennetts in an hotel at Hastings, he took her too, and gave *tant soit peu* umbrage to a lady who later came to know him better.

A note was sent round to invite him with his secretary to come in to supper on Sunday and meet Professor Gilbert Murray. He came alone, of course. After dinner, in that library of the distinguished scientist who was also a sailor, like a ship's cabin with the telescope, pointed permanently out of the window, we sat round and talked ghost-stories. The face of the friend and ally of Huxley, the holder of the Animist theory, was worth seeing as we raved and sentimentalised. Professor Murray, not yet absolutely convinced of the survival of consciousness after death, talked

philosophically and critically about apparitions. Thomas Hardy told ghost stories just as a Wiltshire peasant might, sitting in the ingle-nook of an old inn in Shaftesbury with a hand on each knee. He told the story of the Collingwood caul that someone, knowing his *culte* for Nelson, presented to him. It is the skinny membrane found on the heads of some babies at birth and preserved by the nurse for luck. That of Nelson's friend, so preserved, Mr. Hardy put on a shelf over his bed, where he could touch it. In the night he heard it moving . . . shifting . . .

His zest for the macabre was not proof against traditional terrors inculcated at his mother's knee. He returned the caul to the family.

In his soft, low, yet clear, wistful tones, he related his one perennial dream.

"I am pursued, and I am rising like an angel up into heaven, out of the hands of my earthly pursuers." With a small, deprecating laugh, "I am agitated and hampered, as I suppose an angel would not be, by—a paucity of underlinen."

At Oxford my niece and I were guests of Professor Ker. He naturally could not put us up at All Souls, so he planted us at The Mitre, and gave us dinner in College every night to meet all the notabilities of Oxford. The Beauty, as usual, was the guest of honour. "Prof," as she called him, adored her, and I think her early death helped to break him up. I forgathered with a dear old friend of Bamborough days, the late Master of Balliol and his wife, whom I had known since I was a child, and her son, Lionel, who was tutor to the Prince and took him to Paris—a young god, but one with whom I could not persuade my niece to fall in love.

And all the while I was getting screeds from the disconsolate poet at home, containing jealous innuendos of the Oxford don and what he called "imbecile details" of his present preoccupation that "would look so funny if they were ever printed and read out in court." A premonition! And also the usual imbecile flattery of the beloved object. But every woman knows that every other woman could not help being affected ever so little at being called, all in one sentence, Helen of Troy and Semiramis, St. Catherine

of Siena and Christina of Milan, "with a dash of Becky Sharp and the Blessed Damozel!" One wouldn't be human if one wasn't, and one was.

We returned. It was July. The season was in full swing, and the Beauty was sitting to Mr. Harrington Mann in the mornings and dancing all night. The heart of social London had turned to shady things and parties in gardens, preferably under the stars. There was one party in St. John's Wood—music inside and the hooting of owls out. Supper was spread under the trees, while in the lighted studio a Parisianised American was singing coon songs. The Beauty, like a young white heifer robed in sacrificial chiffon, danced, and we two chaperons sat in the semi-dark where studio and garden, easels and trees, met and were confounded. This means that the windows were taken out. The sheen of white tablecloths loomed under the trees, where earwigs and gnats and blossoms dropped into the creams and jellies that we poetical people hardly touched. . . . Dew falling. . . . The clashing of bits and bridles and the chastened gossip of coachmen in the lane of Melina outside fell on our ear, and, from the studio, the caressing, insinuating refrain, as if the singer, knowing the vanity of human wishes, had his rueful tongue in his cheek all the time:

You shall have all you wa-ant and a little bit mo-re.

It was fate. We all say so.

Alas, the eye of the builder falls covetously on those useful waste places, and their day is not long! The William De Morgans gave a farewell party for The Vale—condemned. Often I had passed its untidy gates in the King's Road, but had never been inside the cat-haunted, park-like grounds. I knew that Whistler had had a house in there, and another painter, and Mr. and Mrs. De Morgan a third house. There were three hosts to that half-acre of land, and, in the semi-darkness, we and a concourse of indistinguishable people that we knew if we could have seen them wandered in and out of three abodes, and wondered idly which of the little Victorian cottages had been the Pink Palace where the lovely model, Maud Franklin, had reigned, and wheeled the baby in the perambulator

dressed as a nurse. In one of these houses there had been a terrible row when the egoist artist discovered that Maud, neglected, scorned, yet retained, had been posing to Stott of Oldham for Venus. Now all is down, and I have sat with Margaret Sackville and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald at lunch in a smart house on the site of this garden of the past.

And about this time the editor spared a day to go down to Tonbridge and have a talk with Edmée Van Der Noot, and in the evening I took my maid with a basket down to Holland Park Avenue, opened the door, mounted the stair, and, carefully making the noise of four pairs of feet so as to impress Mrs. Chandler, prepared a little supper. We found some wine there, and we made sandwiches out of a tin of very special green tomatoes, and very nasty they were. But when the traveller returned, and we had drunk wine together in the good German fashion, we neither of us cared for sandwiches. The refrain of the Italian song from last night was still in our ears. He said:

"There is pleasure in knowing that one can talk to a person who understands one for the rest of one's life; that alone is heaven. . . . And you, in addition. . . . Why, it is heaven and a little bit more."

The poor old Review, that had cost one hundred and twenty pounds a month, and that people, in spite of my superhuman tout-ing, had not been so very anxious to pay the enormous sum of two shillings and sixpence for, was in liquidation. The efforts of Friedrich and Antonia Hueffer and the might of the German mark would be wasted unless a plutocrat could be found to purchase and run it. The editor's fancy heavily turned to thoughts of S. S. McClure. Miss Willa Cather was excessively kind about it, and volunteered to write to S. S., with whom she had much influence, and put the idea into his head. I think the woebegone aspect of the editor, whose young but well-grown literary infant it was threatened to remove from his care, touched her to the heart. We used to go to tea with her in her hotel opposite the British Museum gates and talk and talk. Miss Willa Cather was gentle and quiet

in manner; polite but withdrawn; the modest self-sufficiency of delicate and virile power.

She sat, almost god-like, on her pedestal on the Parnassian heights of *McClure's Magazine*, or I understood her to do so, and watched us squirm and rave in our death-agony—the *English Review's*, I mean.

For, nice as she was to us about it, we felt the Review was lost. S. S. was not taking any.

The editor, sensible of her kindness and interest in his moribund infant, had only one way of repaying her—his usual coin—an introduction to Conrad; but that did not come off. The great man was irritable and irritated by some outside agent. Miss Cather, I think, never saw the long white road in front of Capel House and the French bulldog head, deep between his shoulders, but smiling with all its fangs, of Joseph Conrad. He always came up to time in this way. I mean, he would refuse to see people, he habitually did refuse to see people, but if he was persuaded to see people he turned on the smile and did things properly.

The Beauty, having refused Count A., who owned half Sicily and the revenue accruing from the particular brand of champagne from which he took his name, went back to her Northern home, preferring curates and cassocks to counts and champagne. "So like *Wuthering Heights*!" the editor observed later, when he escorted my mother there for her yearly month with Beauty's mother. But I fancy he was alluding to the atmosphere of Bedburn, for Beauty's home was excessively comfortable. His visit was not a success. How could he have got on with a simple sportsman and fisherman and local J.P., who had got himself on to the board on purpose to deal with poachers! They were "miles apart," my sister said, confessing she liked him best in his own *milieu*. She had had quite a good time in the office of the Review, when he had entertained her, and in the theatres where his own *Critical Attitude* took him.

I realised that I had thrown pearls before swine in the more recondite sense of the word, and I realised, too, that the pearl had been lazy. He was accused, in no measured language, by Beauty's mother of coming to her place in order to rest his brains, and "play-

ing the fool in order to adapt himself to the intellect of his host." Beauty's mother was no fool. Presently he begged to be, and was, relieved by his sister-in-law, who stayed for the rest of the time and brought my mother home. Mary Martindale was Martha Martindale too. She doubled, so to speak, these two scriptural parts. I wish she was here with me now and had not gone to live in Germany.

Then he and I went on a series of visits. One was to Goring Hall, where the Monds were that year, in the very house, I believe, where Esther Waters was servant and had the affair with the groom. A car was put at our special service. And we went to see Sir Harry Johnston at Poling Priory, and the Roman villa at Bignor, and the pictures at Petworth, and to consult the Wise Woman of Storrington—a proceeding to which I was averse, lest she said something discouraging. In the evenings it was poker and pyramids into the small hours, and the editor had the pleasure of losing a lot of money. He could not play a bit. Manlike, he *would* play. He certainly lost well.

Another visit was to Sheringham, where we found Aubrey Beardsley's sister, Mabel Wright, sweet Catholic saint whom the editor and everyone worshipped, and to whom W. B. Yeats wrote his most beautiful poems—"Our Lady of Pain." She always looked as if she had a headache. She was now frail, thin, tall, and mediæval, and it was strange to remember her, buxom, girlish, playing mistress of the house to Louie Freear's charwoman. She never would talk about her brother—the most charitable soul in the world! The editor, in a summer-house in the garden that moved on a pivot, dictated to her some of his new book. Lovely ladies where he happened to be staying were always proud to take up their pens on his behalf, and so we wiled away the time with bridge in the evenings and old Norfolk churches in the day. •

It was at Sheringham that one of those grotesque letters that lawyers are put to it to write when it becomes suddenly necessary for them to drop into the language of romance, was handed to him. We were out on the lawn playing croquet. He shoved it in his pocket and went on playing—just as he did six years later on the golf links at Selsey when a police officer handed him an order to

leave his house on the coast because he was supposed to be a German, had a German name, and because his English secretary insisted on wearing a soft Homburg hat purchased in that region. Enemies in the neighbourhood—and he had many—had been at work. He took the letter then, gave it to his caddie to hold, and made the best stroke he ever did in his life. It became a usual experience. Enquiries were always being set on foot by the envious. And I used to stymie police officers by at once producing his English certificate of birth kept ready. Three or four times that summer, lying in my hammock among the apple-trees in that seaside orchard, I have seen a bashful personage of this description, sent down from London, advised of the traitor in our midst, peeping slyly round the corner of the cottage. I would say, languidly putting a leg out of the hammock: "I know what you've come for," and run in past the man, with his mouth open, and finding my work-box, produce the well-thumbed certificate of birth at Merton, in Surrey, with all the six baptismal names so strangely German in character, wisely changed afterwards. I would note the effect on the good British soul in uniform, and, though longing to offer him a drink, would refrain, since the poor dear would have to refuse it.

It was near my birthday, and I have always regarded it as the happiest birthday of my life, although we did have our first quarrel about the fly to the station. We were staying with an American dentist and his wife, my friend, at a place—Beaumont le Roger—in the very heart of Normandy. Their real home was in the Rue de la Paix where Mr. Farley carried on his practice as a dentist. His wife was Irish, a Power, a descendant of that Earl Ferrers who murdered his butler and had the privilege of being hanged with a silken rope in view of his high station. Farley was quite mad, and his wife, Agnes, was just mad enough to be charming. A large, fine, plain woman, whom sculptors admired. She was young, but if she had lived to be old she would have been like Horace Walpole's Madame du Deffand. I introduced her to Arnold Bennett, who at once appreciated her to the full and wrote a preface to her little book on Beaumont. It is a charming, delicate *Cranford*—in Normandy, not Northants—and ought to be brought out again. He used to show her his poems—eighteenth

century, rococo, French landscape pictures. But where are they? He has published, I think, nearly everything but poems.

The house at Beaumont was one of those little wretched villas that people built last century, both in England and France, at the end of a large and straggling village—a place where Madame Bovary might have lived and been bored.

I was not bored in this *villeggiatura*. The Risle ran almost under the house, so that the *bonne*, stooping, washed her salads and rinsed her dishes in its flow. The rooms were hardly furnished, as a counterblast to the magnificence of the flat in the Rue de la Paix and there were very few of them. He slept *au grenier* and I in a sort of shabby annex to the bedroom of Monsieur and Madame. If I had wanted to get out I should have had to *enjamber* their bed, and, if I wasn't careful, displace one of the bricks that were placed on top of each other to make the fourth leg of my own "maid's bed," as they called it—jog it, and all would be lost!

The editor dictated to me and Agnes alternately a novel called *The Portrait*, sitting on the purple heights of Grosly. In the afternoons we walked in the woods, where boars lurked and were sometimes hunted, or helped William Farley, who was "resting," and, with a pole instead of forceps, attempting to clear the river of weeds and find the pike that ate fish and that nobody had ever seen. Or we would take a rickety *calèche* and visit Lisieux Cathedral, or some old, mediæval château ruined by the Revolution, where, on the ground floor, old black-robed peasant women potted about among dressers covered with bowls of pale primrose-coloured cream, that relieved the grey of the strong stone walls, still fit for a siege, of Harcourt. Or we would walk among high hedges, across marshes, by straggling, forgotten paths, to this or that old ruined *manoir* that would not let. *A cause des revenants!* And to peer between gaps in the blocks of loosened stone and see inside, rising out of straw and rags where pigs and tinkers and gipsies had been sleeping, the traces of casual fires lit on the floor, not in the fireplace, under the old François Premier mantel. And home to good cottage cooking—*omelettes*, *poulets* with white wine, and lashings of Calvados, the wonderful apple cordial of the place.

The *omelettes* were not always good. Once, when Agnes was out, the maid came to me and said Madame had commanded an *omelette* and how was she to make it? I said, confounded at her asking me such a thing:

"Oh, the usual way, I suppose."

That night the sweet came up all prettily flaring—an *omelette aux rhum*. I tasted it. I thought it was queer, and looked round at the others. Obviously they also thought it was queer, and then—I bit upon an onion!

At Evreux, where we decided to go for my birthday treat, a short railway journey away from Beaumont, the Cathedral was all draped and starred—gold on that peculiar French blue that expresses them, and red, of course. All was being got ready for the canonisation of Joan of Arc. We two English of the country that burned her cut but a sorry figure. Still, all was clean, clear, and lovely that day, and our lunch delicious—no absurd, combined sweet and savoury *omelette*—and the cloakroom and bathroom of the hotel exquisite, white tiled, with silver taps, lace pin-cushions, fancy soaps, and the rest of it—a perfect bower of bliss; so I came back and told him, because in little French country towns—and English, too—this was wonderful and unusual.

But we had to go home for the sake of the *English Review*, of which, though it was now run by a company, he was still editor. Hermosa was caretaker, and expected him on Friday some time.

I had got rather ill, and could not risk a night passage and return the way we had come—via Southampton and Havre—so it was decided that we should start on Thursday morning instead of Friday night, arrive in Paris at twelve, and get off by the two o'clock boat, arriving at ten-thirty on Thursday night. This would avoid the night journey. We each sent a telegram, I to my maid to meet me, and the editor to Hermosa, advising her of the change of plan, begging her to be at her desk on Friday at ten sharp in order to begin work. By this he would gain a day and all was well.

It was far worse for me than travelling at night as it happened,

for we had a wet crossing and a long one, and we had chosen to stop on deck. One experienced the usual relief of getting into the rather uncomfortable train that, after the tossing boat, appears so nice, calm, stable and English. Half asleep in my corner I watched for the lights of Smeeth as we rattled by in the dark but I could tell by instinct where the queer, diabolically shaped tower of Aldington Church must be. He of course knew it well but how often have I seen that eldritch tower since in my dreams? Aldington, with its church and its haunted Knoll, is an uncanny place that he has written about often.

The ghost must have laughed! The devilry of Aldington was perhaps responsible for what followed—our neglect of ordinary precautions. We were so good we were careless and I, so neatly chaperoned while I was in France, *tant soit peu* relaxed when I set foot on the shores of England. One of us surely ought to have got out at Hither Green and the other have entered Charing Cross alone. But I was cold, tired and weak . . . a drowned rat dying to get home. I walked after the porter and my luggage. Why did the steps of my companion weaken? I noticed it . . . raised my eyes, too weary to take much in. . . .

But I got an eye-opener for an, after all, conventionally well-regulated person and a chaperon of youth to boot! There on the sort of rostrum where it seems passengers stand to await the porters with their baggage through the Customs . . . ! A vestal virgin suddenly confronted with the irate goddess whose shrine she would seem to have profaned, wasn't in it . . . !

And yet I was, if a drowned, a perfectly respectable rat! Appearances, which after all, on the face of it and in the end, are all we humans have to go by, were against me. For no one on the prosecuting side ever stops to think that for real, intending criminals the easiest thing in the world is to keep the said appearances up. It is no use *being* good.

I had been abroad, staying with respectable, God-fearing friends, chaperoned to the hilt, or the nines! On the cynical face of it I appeared to be returning from a trip to the Continent with a married man.

And I had a maid to meet me, all right. She had been with

me thirty years. He delivered me into her hands saying simply, "It's all up, old girl! You will see. There'll be no divorce."

Alles ist hin! I bade him good-bye and he put me into a cab with my luggage on top and my faithful maid inside and out we rolled, past the Eleanor Cross in the middle of the yard, into the gloomy Strand. Then he went back into the station, as he said "to deal with it." I don't think he did, for there was nothing to deal with. The mess was all cleared away by the time he got back, vengeful goddess, eagle-faced inquisitors, grinning porters, and the little scandal of that night which had so much amused the *personnel* of the staff hushed in the great silence of the station that lasts till dawn.

Well, I supposed from his speech that he sensed that his dream was over—his desire for quite ordinary happiness in the usual course of things, hopelessly quashed. He had expected things to go smoothly. And yet, why? For Joseph Leopold is, though a Romantic, no believer in the inherent nobleness and chivalry of human nature—of feminine human nature, at least. All his women—at least they seem so in his novels—are Very Women, of mere mediæval morality, behaving always at the dictates of the old-fashioned mental apparatus which we Suffragettes hope we have left behind. Women—Cats! Uncivic cats! That's about it! But it was obvious that he had muffed it—we had muffed it by that reckless and foolish visit to the Farleys. And he might send Elizabeth Schultz away—she would never be any use and she might just as well pack up and go home to Germany or Timbuctoo. It was New South Wales, as a matter of fact.

But for me, the female protagonist in this matter, there were other—more or less social considerations. (N.B. I did not then dream that Henry James would turn Pharisaical.) But I am a novelist as well as Joseph Leopold and a woman, with a different sense of values, and I was afraid the cat might perhaps jump differently, but convinced that it would jump. There might still be a divorce and one that would ruin me socially and deprive me of what was, next to Joseph Leopold, the pride and pleasure of my life. For the next few months I went in the dread of the greatest misfortune that could, at that still stringently Victorian epoch, be-

fall an unmarried woman with a mother to take care of, and a girl to chaperon; and a large circle of friends and relations to placate and keep in a good humour. Does post-war woman realise the differentiation of the standard of manners that has obtained since 1918? In pre-war days Hamlet's brutal suggestion to the débutante Ophelia was perfectly practical politics—"Be thou chaste as ice and cold as snow, thou shalt not 'scape calumny," or accept male escort in any circumstances whatever. One could not go out in the dark, one could not go out in the rain even, because one's dress was so long that it took any amount of holding up lest it got "messed" about the hem. One had to take, in fact, all the care in the world to prevent one's flopping, feminine, vulnerable character from getting smirched or, at least, needing a new "bind." Marriage? At that moment, standing bewildered, worried, and frightened, I would have taken cover—married anyone!

Nowadays, when skirts are so short that even children cannot reach up to their mother's apron-string—if she wears one; and actually the fashion of to-day shows a little apron about as big and useful as that of Rosina, the maid, in *Il Barbiere*—there is no great danger of their getting muddied, and one can be as careless as one likes, short of total immersion in a mud bath at Piccadilly Circus on a wet night.

I remember when I was a girl watching, fascinated, at the Royal Academy private view, a woman I knew—a shrinking, beautiful, famous creature—on the arm of her brother-in-law, looking as if she wished the floor would open and swallow her. She was being very brave, for this was an appearance-saving device of sorts instigated by her family with the collaboration of the supposed injured wife, who came up and spoke to her quite nicely in the course of the evening. They were famous persons, all three—and deservedly so. They were exploiting their fame—and they succeeded, just as did the lady who became an Ambadress, and was able to trail her unpleasant leash of little dogs over the parquets of the Embassy, to the disgust of the Roman ladies. Her experiment was touch and go. All the Row was on its hind legs, so another beauty of the period who was an eye-witness tells me, to see if she would pull it off. And my fair, frail friend and her

brother-in-law were followed through the rooms of Burlington House as though she were Royalty.

The prestige of both these ladies, in their degree, saved them—as, I suppose, mine did me. I had a great deal “on” it—the care of my mother, the cherished long visits of the Beauty. . . .

Certain gatherings to which, during my various terms of chaperonage, I had allowed my niece to go, in essence as respectable, as innocent, as they make them, would be in these days considered as prim and as boring as a meeting of Friends. The drawing-room at Holland Park Avenue, even in those days styled a little Bohemian, seemed quieter than the village schoolrooms where she and her friends would meet once a week to discuss Scott’s *Rokeby* or *The Odyssey*. Talk of my taking her to 84 nowadays, and kindred places! She would take me to amuse me with what had long since ceased to amuse or even startle her. Chaperonage, my pride and my care in those days, is now obsolete. A chaperon is a dodo—a lovely and darling dodo if you will. Bohemia has lost its terrors and also its interest. The *Yellow Book* was said by a witty journalist to have turned grey in a single night of 1895; six years of after-war would have made its poll as white as driven snow. It is young girls who give the Bohemian parties now on top floors in Bloomsbury, and the young men bring the drinks. And other aunts’ Beauties, self-willed and opinionated, fling their pretty caps over the windmill and recover them, or make themselves a new one every morning. And there is no cap to throw, for their own grandmothers do not wear one.

And even in those days the most straitlaced were not always as straitlaced as they seemed. I went down to Eltham soon after this for lunch with one of the very wittiest women in England. Lovely walks home across the Park from women writers’ dinners and committees we used to have! Her wit, easy, not too dry, human, suited me exactly; she had an old-fashioned turn of mind, like me, that delighted and soothed me. She was just like “Isabel Carnaby,” who should not so easily have been let die.

This day she was sitting with her father, her mother, and her publisher. Her husband was at the school where he was master, but he was taking me to the ruins of the old palace after lunch;

but my hostess, leading me up to her room to take off my hat, showed me with some zest a modern relic far more exciting—to her at least, but I like real antiquities. . . .

“Do you see that?” she asked, pointing out of the window across the park to a little low cottage opposite nestling in some trees. That was all I saw.

“Look close at the side of the house, under the window.”

I looked, and saw a very ordinary drain-pipe running up from the ground to that window.

“That,” said the lady, “that is the very drain-pipe that Mr. Parnell climbed up to get to Mrs. O’Shea!”

The mild antiquarian charm of the Palace of Eltham must pale in the light of that.



To Will. Hunt
her faithful old friend
Lamb House
November 3rd 1905
Henry James

HENRY JAMES

1909-10

Lovers in London—Condition of the Review—The Harmless Necessary Elizabeth at 84—An Invitation to Rye—The “Veracious Pinker”—The Arm of the Goddess—The Editor to Henry James—I too—Honesty not the best Policy—“Lamentable, oh, lamentable!”—Invitation cancelled—Placards in High Street—Means to an End—Early Victorian Revulsion—“Alas, how easily things go wrong!”—Try another Way—Amenities of Brixton Gaol—A Lost Legacy—Wylye and Marten—Hunt for Hudson—Messages from Conrad and James—“Dear Violet” again—Teas and Tennis—American Poets and Beauties—Hudson and Ann Veronica—The Cabaret Club and Madame Strindberg—Arnold Bennett and my Mother—Gaiety and Gloom—Waiting for a Move—No “Consequences in the Stars.”

THAT was a black autumn. Influenza was very bad. The whole of the new Mrs. Arnold Bennett's stay in England was ruined by it, so her husband wrote, and we never saw either of them. We walked every day together in Kensington Gardens and sometimes as far as the Row where, among the determined winter riders, Cunninghame Graham on his Arab waved to us, walking along by the railings. Or in the sunken garden by the Orangery to avoid the wind, or:

..... On the sodden grass
The black sheep straggling here and there.
And the sullen pond, like a looking-glass—
I'd rather be here than anywhere!

This quotation, from a poem called “Lovers in London,” the composite work of Andrew Lang and myself, suited our mood.

There was very little to be pleased about. The *English Review*, like a fine lusty baby well started in life, that only wanted money for its special foods and up-to-date feeding bottles, was slipping, had slipped, out of the editor's yearning arms. He edited it, but it was no longer his own, his own invention, on which he had thought nothing of dropping a hundred and twenty pounds a month.

We hardly spoke of it, but of the ducks, of Oliver Cromwell's defences and the expense of laying out the borders with spring flowers, an expense to which I objected, and was at once called hard and "North Country." Any stick will do for a sick man to beat a sympathising dog with.

Then he went back to his desk, and I did not see him all day—for I was now not allowed to go to the office any more—until the evening, when he would come and dine with my mother and myself, and then play picquet with her, sing to me, and at eleven sharp I would let him out and close the door behind him, and he would return to his cheerless home, where Elizabeth Schultz was now domiciled. Mrs. Miller was gone. They had to have a cook now, a German called Gertrud, and she had a son. I heard of him now and then. Elizabeth kept house rather expensively, I gathered. She was preoccupied by herself, her nails, and a cageful of Budge-rigars, and the cage kept falling down and killing a bird now and then, when she wept. Germans are fonder of birds than of other pets. The poet cherished her greatly and insisted on her being put forward as much as possible. She was shy and modest, and deprecating of her appearance. Yet people admired her.

May, who saw her once at a party at 84, where she had been persuaded to appear and pour out tea, dressed in one of my frocks—grey mock fur made tight and plain in the new mode that was coming in—asked me who the beautiful, pale, Russian princess was?

Silent, unseen except on this one occasion, she was like a sickly, discontented spirit about the house. I had never felt at ease in it since she came there, yet she liked me, and shyly confided in me. She wanted her Papa—she pronounced the a's short—to set her up in a dressmaking business.

I thought the importation of this young lady a mistake. She was supposed to be housekeeper, but she was quite a muff at that, and permitted her compatriot to do as she would. Mr. Chandler and "the Fairy" often confided to me their painful surmises. There was far too much going up and down stairs of the out-of-work son carrying black shiny bags, which, Chandler averred, contained whole legs of mutton ordered of him in the master's name. And an immense amount of white wine from the grocer's next door

for kitchen use that never got into the stews! But the editor was not one to count the cost—any cost—in any case.

And Henry James, for me, in the fierce glow of new and absorbing interests, had somewhat gone out, his pale, spiritual glimmer showing faint, extinguished among the marasmal lights—the *feu follets* of Rye. It seemed plain from his letter that at last he had really left the world. . . .

“I am divorced from contact With The Improper Person of Babylon (Which widow was she, I wonder?) and the call of London in however honied tones simply appals me. I am here at Rye where I inveterately work—and should, with all the Graces, Wits, Beauties and Celebrities crowding my lordly hall at once from 10.15 to 1.30.”

That is what I was used to at Lamb House. As soon as breakfast was over he retired by covered ways through the garden to what I call the *Maison de Péché* and which George III would have called a gazebo, a red brick summer house built at right angles to his front door, with one big window on the street. This is the window which Mr. E. F. Benson has immortalised as that from which Miss Mapp made her observations and studies of her neighbours' front doors and their outcomings and incomings, at acute—very acute angles. I would be left alone to write or read—the works of Mrs. Humphry Ward in a long row over the sort of stage writing table he did *not* use but left to his guests, while in carpet slippers, as if for an assignation, he joined his secretary who would be waiting for him discreetly in the room that I was never privileged to enter.

I do not think that permanent solitude and everlasting dictation was the best life for Henry James. Dictating made him slightly prosy; solitude made him sad. He seemed to sigh continually for the fresh welling founts of scandal. . . .

“It's all rather dismal and I don't see life. . . . At your lurid reverberations or reflections, rather, of the *grouillante* Babylon I sit tighter here, somehow, I cross myself and throw a log on my solitary fire. However, keep doing the worldling and Time Spirit for me and come and sit by the fire with me one of these not too distant days. . . .”

And again, "Here I am face to face with fate in the form of a great lonely horizon on which the grey March dusk descends in driving rain. . . ."

How he hated the country and how cleverly he had kept away from it! How sadly he had succumbed at last. Obviously the Pain of the March was on him which all dwellers thereon must feel at times . . . and come at the latest, to feel inveterately. He knew it. He was a bit of a sardonic fatalist. And he was choosing to read over some of Joseph Leopold's "little lays, taken from the real wretchedness of things." (By which he meant *country* things.) "All about the poetry of the cold and the damp and the mud and the nearness to earth. . . ."

Of course, the pavements prevent that in London and hinder the nice smell, too. And then, cleverly, he turns his grouching into compliment. "Ah, the Human Interest is lacking!" This was the title of a book of mine I had just sent him. He liked to have books sent him though he read all other peoples' works under protest and with frightful threats of undiluted sincerity.

"I don't, at my battered and brutal stage of life and reflection, read any fiction naïvely or unquestioningly. The eternal critic within me asserts his rights and takes his ease and his fun as he goes."

And he was not by way of being able to read women's books at all, but he certainly read with a measure of attention one novel, which I insisted on sending him as being the work of a confirmed and faithful disciple. This was *The Clearer Vision* by Ethel Colburne Mayne. I told him that *The Telegraph* had reviewed it magnificently, hailing Miss Mayne as "possessing a style modelled on his and that of Mr. Henry Harland." Henry Harland, editor of *The Yellow Book*—Miss Mayne had been sub-editress—was also a disciple so Miss Mayne's little volume was truly James-of-the-James. I told him that, for once, *The Daily Telegraph* had done a bit of real right thinking. It realised that Miss Mayne had shared with him "the cult of the word, of the right adjective, the carefully chosen epithet" that Miss Mayne agreed with him "in her appreciation of the niceties, the subtleties of distinction which the mere turn of a sentence is capable of conveying."

Truly the *mot juste* just then was finding its public all right, the practice of the cult was at its apogee. Conrad was doing it—Joseph Leopold too. So early *The Telegraph* had learned its literary manners. Good old *Telegraph*! . . .

(Just as I got as far as that I discover that I, myself, wrote the review in question so further patting on the back of *The Telegraph* seems to be contra-indicated.)

“I really thank you for sending me the volume of your little Corker, telling me vividly of such strange and hapless things. . . .” He was pleased to call Miss Mayne a Corker because she lived in Cork—after the style of an Edward Lear nonsense verse. As for the adjective—I seem to see all the incipient, un-correlated scorn of the male for the female writer there! And this was a great deal—was about all the attention I got for my Corker—in every sense a corker, as she has turned out since. He did vouchsafe to say next time I saw him, by way of serious though adverse criticism that “she does not cut the cord.” Does the author whose disciple she is perform that operation? And what cord, precisely, is meant? Communication? Umbilical? . . . I am afraid that I have forgotten at this moment of time.

Nobody, I verily believe, can be at times more dense, more stupid and, consequently, crueller than a clever, rather invalidish, very old friend. Someone came back from staying at Lamb House and told me that Henry James was rather more dickey than usual. I wrote to him and received in return a letter combining the suavity of the host with the touchiness of the invalid:

Lamb House,

Rye,

Sussex.

October 31st, 1909.

MY DEAR VIOLET,—Yes, indeed, I am at Rye—where else should I be? For I am here pretty well always and ever, and less and less anywhere else. There are advantages preponderant in that; but there are also drawbacks; one of which is that I am liable to go so long without seeing you. But to this, on the other hand, there are possible remedies—as, for instance, that of

your conceivably (I hope) coming down here for a couple of nights before very long. Is this thinkable to you? Not unaware as you are of my homely and solitary state, my limited resources, my austere conditions, and frugal though earnest hospitality. I am more and more aged, infirm, and unattractive, but I make such a stand as I can, and shall be very glad to see you if you can brave the adventure or face such a tiresome displacement on such meagre terms. We can have a long jaw (with lots of arrears to make up), and, weather permitting, eke a short walk. The *week-end* would suit me (though I am not restricted to that) of almost any of the next weeks, and you could perhaps then take the Saturday a.m. train and get here for luncheon—in which case we could take even two walks. Let me know what I may hope, and that health and peace attend you, and believe me to be,

Yours ever,

HENRY JAMES.

I accepted with the usual heartily expressed elation. This was partly the meed of the respect I bore him but I think I had really come to love him a little because of this very respect. The mighty, imperturbable Conscience—of course, living in the country and working it is almost impossible to act against the dictates of such conscience—that he exhibited, the utter purity of outlook and intention that showed in every action and attitude of his, had earned my admiration and made me tolerate and even be amused by the sweet spite that welled up in him now and then and made him human—quite human. He had not hurt me—yet, though he was soon to inflict a wound that went near to kill love. He was, I think, a sort of Robespierre—Incorruptible, but not Sea Green, without the callousness but with a little of the rigidity which makes a man-law-giver or novelist—uncompromising in matters of art, religion, politics and morals for his friends as well as for himself. I never knew him do a mean thing or heard one reported of him, even. So, determining that I would not behave meanly to him in any way, I buckled myself to the disagreeable task of writing to him in the short week that was to elapse before I got

into the train for Rye. I would put—and have put—this austere novelist and timorous reactor to social law in full possession of certain factors in my present affairs. I considered, and so did Joseph Leopold, that I was putting my head straight into the lion's—my mentor's—mouth but *noblesse*, and even the *tiers état*, obliges—the rules of his hospitality on his side and guestdom on mine appeared to demand the clean breast, unless I wished the recluse of Rye to be suddenly, on my account, posed with a moral question which he might take seriously or not—God knows! He was of Puritan stock, though, as another author once wrote of me—he wrote so “naughty.”

I might be married from Lamb House but not, perhaps, go into the Courts from thence.

For there had been signs . . . rumblings . . . my pitch seemed to have been queered, damnably. . . .

One evening I got a short note from H. G. much distracted by something “the veracious Pinker” had told him. He did hope I wasn't going to get into another mess—any mess—a particular mess he had heard of? Dear H. G.!

Pinker always knew everything, and was always looking out to do something kind and apposite with his knowledge. And a week after I had accepted I received letters from Henry James which decidedly knocked the first nail into my coffin. For observe the change of title—a change subtle and cruel!

DEAR VIOLET HUNT,—I should be writing to you to-night to say that it would give me great pleasure to see you on Saturday next had I not received by the same post which brought me your letter one from —, which your mention of the fact that you have known of his writing of it enables me thus to allude to as depriving, by its contents, our projected occasion of indispensable elements of frankness and pleasantness. I deeply lament and deplore the lamentable position in which I gather you have put yourself. . . . It affects me as painfully unedifying, and that compels me to regard all agreeable or unembarrassed communications between us as impossible. I can neither suffer you to come down to hear me utter those homely truths, nor pretend at

such a time to free or natural discourse of other things on a basis of avoidance of what must now be most to the front in your own consciousness, or what in a very unwelcome fashion disconcerts mine. Otherwise, "*es wäre so schön gewesen!*" But I think you will understand, on a moment's further reflection, that I can't write to you otherwise than I do, or that I am very sorry indeed to have to do it.

Believe me, then, in very imperfect sympathy,

Yours,

HENRY JAMES.

I wrote, and he replied:

. . . I am obliged to you for your letter of Wednesday last, but, with all due consideration for it, I do not see, I am bound to tell you, that it at all invalidates my previous basis of expression to you on receipt of ——'s letter. It appeared from that, that the person best qualified to measure the danger feared for your reputation, and I really don't see how an old friend of yours *could* feel or pronounce your being in a position to permit of this anything but lamentable, lamentable, oh, lamentable! What sort of a friend is it that would say less? I wasn't for a moment pretending to characterise the nature of the relations . . . that may conduce to that possibility which in themselves are none of my business at all. But your *position* as a result of them! If I had to speak of it again I am afraid I could only speak of it as lamentable. . . . I, however, deprecate the discussion of private affairs of which I wish to hear nothing whatever. And, neither knowing or willing to know anything of the matter, it was exactly because I didn't wish to that I found conversing with you at all to be in prospect impossible. That was the light in which I didn't—your term is harsh!—*forbid* you my house; but deprecated the idea of what would otherwise have been so interesting and welcome a *tête-à-tête* with you. I am very sorry to have had to lose it, and I am yours in regret,

HENRY JAMES.

November 5th, 1909.

It was represented to him that he had more or less put himself in the position of a judge, and vehemently he disclaimed it. He didn't "for a moment pretend to judge, qualify, or deal with any act of conduct of V. H.'s in the connection, as a part, matter of . . . that whole quantity being none of my business and destined to remain so. . . . I deplored or lamented the situation in which you had landed or were going to land her. . . . I don't see how an old friend of hers can be indifferent to that misfortune. . . ."

"But these things surely are your own affair. . . . I wish you very heartily that your complications may work out for you with some eventual 'Peace with honour.'"

Then I wrote to my dear Henry James passionately, speaking for myself, declaring that, for my part, I wasn't in a "lamentable position" at all. That I had nothing to do but speak the truth and defend myself if what he feared should come to pass. I said that I thought it very hard that he should turn against me, and that, though I was sorry I might not come to Lamb House, I quite understood that it might be inconvenient and unpleasant to him to have me under his roof. I wanted him to believe that I should listen humbly enough to home truths from him if only a certain amount of the sympathy on which I had learned to count was behind it.

I assured him in plain language, using the stock, stereotyped expression consecrated by long use, that I was "innocent," and could not be dragged into anything, and that, as for the other details, could he not, if he was ever in the least interested in me, come and see me in town and let me tell him how I stood. I impressed upon him that he ought to count it to me that I had put him in possession of certain facts, and could very easily have paid my visit to Lamb House even at the risk of involving him in a scandal and selfishly grabbed my pleasure at the expense of his ease.

For one knew that the one thing Henry really dreaded was being mixed up with life in any way, or entangled in anything that went on outside the drawing-room door. He was in no sense a man of the world. And, being what he was, would it not have savoured of social meanness if, through mere contact, I were to procure the soilure of the white hem of Henry's robe of innocence? And there

it should rest. If he, on his side, had not compassed the man's virtue of being *sans peur*, I had acted according to my own conscience and should retain the woman's of being *sans reproche*, so far as he was concerned. So that was that!

Christmas week was out. I had persuaded my friend Alfred Mond, to buy the Review, and, because his political views were so essentially different from those of the editor, there was nothing left for him to do but politely to relieve him of his task of editorship. The hurry of his spirits at depriving a man of his ewe-lamb was such that the kind Alfred ante-dated his letter by a year. The editor, on the rack, graciously undertook, however, to produce the February number for the new editor and drill him in some of the practices which had made the Review worth buying.

And we walked as usual in the Park, treading the dead leaves like faded hopes under our feet, in silence. For a week of mornings he did not address more than three words to me.

Legal documents of all sorts, from all sorts of men about all sorts of things on his side and on mine began to flutter on to our doormats and into our letter-boxes. "I canna tell a'! I canna tell a'!" Everything damned at once, for me and for him! The Law, of which till then I had not the slightest cognisance, for I came of decent people, loomed enormous—Law, insinuating itself like malarial dust into every simple-seeming detail of life—into the hall, the parlour, even into my poor mother's sick-room. Law can be forced upon the unheeding, as I came to learn, just as you can be the prey of germs in the street all unbeknown, and family law is the most insidious, the most penetrating of germs, bitterest in the mouth of all. I got sour and corrupted. Legal terms, as obscure to me as logarithms, and as perplexing, ran off my tongue. I became as inventive, as pettifogging as a little country attorney—I who, when I was about twenty-eight, having received my first cheque for my "Autolycus" article in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, had marched into the first bank I came to, somewhere near Trafalgar Square, and asked them to cash it.

"Your own bank?" the polite cashier insinuated.

"I have no bank,"—and a long sigh. I kept that cheque a week.

It was not till I was paid for my second novel that I opened an account with eighty pounds at Barclay's Bank. Lord Kinnear, the dear old white-haired gentleman who walked up and down past the clerks behind their railings, treated me like a child, gave me advice, and warned me against overdrawing.

Money—money—all money—repugnant to the romantic mind! Money *per se* meant nothing to me. The spending of it came, as it does to us all, naturally, without effort, and nothing became me in my life so well as the losing of it, which I always did with the grace of ignorance. And I always imagined that lawyers and nice barristers, whom I danced with and met constantly at dinners, were male Portias, doing things for nothing and defending the helpless for the honour and glory of it. But now I was beginning to see that money had always meant everything—now as then. The editor had always told me, as a result of his study of mediæval documents, that, in the days when knights were bold and ladies the prize of the victor, the urge of money was even worse. The wealth of Helen of Troy, as well as her beauty, figures in the Iliad whenever she is mentioned. The men who fought for the praise of ladies and their bright eyes were the men who carried off rich women, imprisoned their mothers-in-law, and married other men's widows for the *beaux yeux* of their *cassette*, and the coarse phrasing used by the law in the dealings of married folk merely masks a monetary claim. . . .

Christmas—and Elizabeth presented me with a large slab of marzipan she had purchased for me, which I refused to eat, being tired to death of the sight of her domiciled at 84, as if for ever.

On Tuesday the 11th of January, as I was innocently going about my mother's business in my familiar shopping centre of Kensington High Street, my eyes fell on the legend set forth on a sandwich-board borne about by one of the dowdy men walking in the gutter. It dissociated itself at once from the other peripatetic advertisements with which I was so familiar as never to cast an eye on. It would be the Turkish Baths—at the corner where the 'buses stop?

MR. HUEFFER TO GO BACK IN FOURTEEN DAYS

I suppose most people are cognisant of the formula used in Restitution Orders. I was not. I hadn't been thinking of it very much, just then; and, anyhow, I had not expected it to come like that. I had been living on a volcano, and had got used to it in so many ways, resigning myself to existence on a slope, amongst scorix and brimstone from the crater whence new trouble constantly belched—fires of hate and passion from below, stoked by greed. Money “working” still, a loathsome yeast at the very bottom of the earth!

May Sinclair, when I talked like this, always said that, for her part, she'd rather take a bungalow on the edge of my particular volcano than row in the same boat with more knowing and cunning persons: sick she was “of the world we lived in, of cowardice and hypocrisy, and abominable, poisonous, sham morality.”

Well, here it was, a fine overflow of lava for me. I had never in my life been associated, so far as I knew, with anyone who had ever “been in the papers.” Sheltered Victorian women were not exposed by their men, much, to these things. . . . The immediate incidence of that placard appalled me. The name of the man who would ring the bell at my mother's house that very evening and ask for me was being promenaded up and down the street in capitals on a sandwich-board! It was a mercy that my niece had a cold and wasn't out with me this morning, for, possibly, the malign thing would have drawn its head in by the afternoon. Some other scandal would have turned up, for they seem to succeed each other on these posters like lightnings on a screen. Somebody might murder somebody between lunch and tea and engage the public's attention effectively. . . .

My suffrage experiences should have rendered me immune to the horrors of any sort of publicity, though, indeed, I do not find political publicity as irksome as the other. And I had the same sensation of being drowned, submerged under a tidal wave, that had come over me in the passage of the Underground a year ago, at the moment when, dropping the screen of my cloak, I had whipped out my collecting-box and begun to beg. That was an awful moment, but it was soon over. I had had something to do, something

to pull off. I had rattled my box at the right people, and looked pathetic at those whom the rattling would set against me, and I had got as much money and a little more than any other solicitants. That disgusting moment had had its pleasant reward at least. After all, one cannot gain anything without paying for it in some sort of sick distaste and apprehension of possible failure. We all fight, we humans, suffragettes and all, to provoke a change—something better, or, if for nothing else, for peace—"the central peace which subsists," so Wordsworth says, "at the heart of endless agitation." I always wrote that quotation in the Suffrage Bazaar copies of books one had to send.

I set my lips and walked home, wondering how I would face my mother's servants? The maid who would let in the man whose name was "up," as she put it, all along Kensington High Street, the cook who would cook our dinner that very night! . . .

But I needn't have worried myself. He did not come up to see me that evening at all or for many evenings after that—too shy. I didn't wonder. Just imagine Conrad or Henry James in the same case? . . . But, I know them, they would never have permitted themselves to come within a hundred miles of such a quandary, not for fame or love or money!

And indeed that night if he had come, I was in the mood to say to him:

"Why not go back and have done with it?" For Peace—a dreary sort of peace would certainly come to him that way. The peace of Renunciation that he was so good at. The "stupid, but exceedingly patient donkey"—his father's phrase that rankled, always. . . .

Time passed . . . months . . . well into May-time! No stones—weighty—not even a pebble—dropped into the silent pool of our fates. A conspiracy of silence! I went to many parties and the Beauty liked them. She missed the editor, who never came near on those days willing, it would seem, to see us less often . . . rage, shamefacedness, what do I know? He plugged away at his Review, put more money into it, nearly ruined himself over it, made it into a company . . . He also seemed to have joined the con-

spiracy of silence, so that I never, to this day, knew how he was taking it. He could easily have said "I told you so." He had been right last year at Charing Cross Station. . . . Anyway, true to his philosophy of *laisser-faire*, *laisser-aller*, do what you want and (let the other people) take what you get for it, he went on doggedly editing very well—my stuff too, for I had a serial running in the Review.

I suppose that in his so very recondite heart of hearts he knew he had muffed it. Self-deception as usual—the want of that form of imagination which is called sympathetic—the Shelleyan type of mind that scorns to drill itself into calculating its effects on other people and to take their mentality into account and realise that, in the end, the mighty subliminal consciousness that secretly sways us has its will. People say one thing, mean another, and do a third.

I rang up my solicitor but the dear man was vague about everything. It is a way nice solicitors who love you have when things are going to be awkward in all sorts of legal ways. The "best laid schemes of mice and men! . . ." Probably to a male questioner he would have been more explicit. We women had not got the Vote as yet and men still snubbed us, kept us uninformed, while spending our money.

I am apt to fight a losing game for all I am worth and lose it gaily, quoting to myself the funny parody of Christina Rossetti written by a Cambridge undergrad:

Those who ask shan't have,
Those who don't, don't want,
I'll have it!
You shan't!

I always do ask. Sometimes I get it, but when I don't, pessimistically I sing a song of George Macdonald's:

Alas, how easily things go wrong!
A sigh too much or a kiss too long,
And there comes a mist and a weeping rain,
And life is never the same again!

No, it never would be; and with the mist and the weeping rain came a shower of Summonses, Petitions and Affidavits. I wonder how many times this year on my way to reception or tea-party I "smacked calfskin"—held up my hand with a funny little book in it that might have been a Nelson classic for all I knew—and swore, mumbling, after the Commissioner for Oaths, that what had been said and written for me was the truth and nothing but the truth . . . ?

I seemed to have drawn a blank . . . in happiness. No Rewards and Fairies for me, no hope of the romantic millennium of which I had dreamed, of sentimental and satisfactory adjustments of joy or, at least, amenity all round, that many indications had led me to hope. I suppose I don't know human nature, no novelist does. We are all altruistic, of necessity, or we couldn't begin to write novels that might hope to please.

For me it seems the wheel of fate had not been even jogged. Complete stagnation! I felt like an aeronaut in a pocket—"stymied" in the air, I who like movement, even painful movement when every step hurts. To draw each breath in pain is better than being dead. If I could avoid the pangs of acute rheumatism by entire quiescence I should not lie still. . . .

And distinct damage had perhaps been done, losses incurred in my mad bid for my little millennium. In reaching out for one sort of happiness I had, may be, dropped that which I held. All that month I moved about dreading, yet daring, the moral shoot of anguish that I might very likely suffer through disobedience to advice in the past. Next to one other person I loved the Beauty better than anyone else in the world and she might be taken from me now. Yes, "The Crowned Caprice that rules the world" might play with me soon!

The immediate outcome of it all for the present seemed to be for the editor ten days in Brixton Gaol by the Court's decree, willingly obeyed. He had, so to speak, asked for it. There was something to pay, and he would have paid it, only that a sort of fanciful coup suggested itself to him. He conceived a plan such as would naturally occur to a romanticist, entailing the use of the word prison instead of gaol, and durance vile for a fair lady

instead of detention at His Majesty's pleasure. He would do it. It might bring about a change of heart, and so compass his desire. He refused to plead poverty and let the law take its course. I secretly believe he longed for the experience, and felt that, buoyed up by hope and greed of copy, he would be none the worse for prison fare and plank bed.

He had now become my mother's paying guest and lived in our house, paying her £3 a week, ample in those days, where I could look after him as well as the niece. Number 84 was partially dismantled, and one room given up to Mr. Byles, who was playing at being a literary agent there. During the editor's absence Mary Martindale and I, on his behalf, sold most of the library, spending long days hunting up and returning first volumes of valuable works to their owners. I still possess the first volume of a book of William Rossetti's, which got forgotten.

And one morning I packed a bag for the editor to take along with him to Marylebone Police Court. His further destination was a foregone conclusion.

Setting him down in a neighbouring slum, so as to preserve appearances—I never forgot I was a chaperon—I bade him farewell for as long a term as His Majesty's officers of the law should decree. "I don't plead poverty!" His contumacy, of the nature of a *parti pris*, was naturally not understood of the people!

My mother, the Beauty, and the servants at home were under the impression that he was going down to stay with a friend in the country, and I did not see him again until he had been in prison for four days, and had written me one letter to my three. Innocent! I had sent him the daily paper every day.

His friends took it all as a joke. Ezra Pound, from Lago di Garda, called him the Apostle in Bonds, and perpetrated shocking parodies on the comic event in the style of "The Ballad of Reading Gaol."

Luckily this tactical error was not repeated. The sum for which he was "quodded" was paid all right in the end and after that he kicked no more at the pricks and forked out like a man. And he got "the experience" all right. During the daily prison walk he had contrived to converse with Those Charming People, expert

burglars, fraudulent clerks, and stout-hearted business men who, refusing to pay their rates, compassed a rest cure, found themselves able to obey their doctor's orders *re* smoking and drinking, and, moreover, got off paying the sum for which they suffered since it appears that a man cannot be tried again for the same offence.

I went to see him escorted by the faithful René Byles. I was inducted into a place that looked like a stable with a manger, where there was, however, no straw or refuse. I waited in front of a window with a pane not of glass but such stuff as meat-safes are made of, and presently a queer, grimacing figure surged up behind it and spoke to me in a voice strangely unlike the editor's own. He was a little hysterical but making the best of it. In ten minutes he told me what he had to eat, what he did all day—which was nothing—and how he had contrived to get the warder, sent in to show him *how* to make his bed, to make it *for* him on the plea of writer's cramp and general incompetency; of the one book from the prison library that had been doled out to him to read: *A Story for Girls*, by Mrs. L. T. Meade, and his deprivation of half an hour of his promenade because, being a Catholic, he had to take that out in going to chapel.

And on Saturday, because next day was Sunday, two days of his sentence were commuted and he came out. Mr. Byles and I took him to The Continental near Victoria, and made him, who had barely eaten for a week, "get outside" a beefsteak. He had the usual complaints to make of prison fare—shocking stews, high meat, four little brown loaves of bread a day, which he could not touch because they were wet in the middle, and gruel. I treasured up these details because if, some day, I was sent to prison as a suffragette, this was what I should have to eat. He handed me a piece of wax, a needleful of pack-thread and a small tab of sacking. He had been making post-bags. I treasured this, too. And when we got home my maid unpacked his bag, and marvelled at his socks, three pairs sewn up into tight balls. I said I supposed that the children in the house where he had been staying had been having a game with them. When I questioned him he told me that, bored with Mrs. Meade's book, he had tried to relieve the tedium by practising the Cinquevalla "touch," en-

deavouring to keep the three woollen billiard balls going off his back and arms at the same time.

Then, when I thought he could bear it, I gave him some heavy news from Germany. Two days ago his Aunt Laura had died. She was his very rich aunt. Her will, altered an hour before her death, made her so well-rubbed-in, thumping legacy to her nephew doubtful till January, 1911, and contingent on his good behaviour. So, through her sudden death—she had had a shock, news from England, *on dits* about her favourite nephew—he had lost quite a lot of money in hand and his children's future. His judgement was slightly distorted by the illness consequent on a week's starvation—for how could he eat the things he was given to eat? And he could not get rid of the idea that what had killed Tante Laura was hearing that he was "doing time." That, as a matter of dates, seemed possible; after all, as he said, you can get to Münster in Westphalia in less than twenty-four hours, and she had died two days after he had been gaoled. His Majesty's four loaves of "sad" baked bread a day had made the prisoner ill, not because he ate them, but because he didn't, and there was little else "to follow," as we say in the world of freedom.

The May number was out, and Hermosa was left in charge, as usual, of the Review, and we—my mother and Elizabeth, whom I found I could tolerate because she was going back to Königsberg, nor did I grudge her her solatium—went to a place that he knew of—the scene of one of his books. Fordingbridge is a dull, quiet village set in flat green meadows cut up with dykes and ditches, so that when you drove, what with crossing and re-crossing these little runlets, the dogcart seemed to be going round and round like a kitten after its own tail. We were within a drive of Salisbury and Wylie and Longford and Winterbourne Stoke where he had lived in early days. The Bell Inn was all right. •

We would walk in the dusk up the great ridge from the old house at the far end of Chicklade Bottom, and up the long hill to Stockton Wood, to listen for the nightingales. We hoped to track down the mysterious Mr. Hudson and bring him out of his lonely *cache* to make merry with us. What a fine motive it was for walks! It was the Hudson country—the wild, lonely Argen-

tine had made it his own, and we never drove through Marten or Broad Chalke without feeling that he was watching us pass in our dogcart, peeping from behind the drawn blinds of some rough peasant's cottage in which he would have taken up his abode in quest of intimate details of the habits of swallows and solution of the mystery of the laying of the cuckoo's eggs. But this time we did not meet him, although he afterwards told me that he had been actually living in Marten on the day we drove through. At Fordingbridge I heard, for the first time, the crude, harsh shout of the nightingale, for all the world like the wail of a beggar's baby abandoned under a hedge. I told the naturalist about that long afterwards, and he related to me the story of Procne and the slain child, saying that what I had heard was surely the cry of Philomela: "Swallow, my sister, O sister swallow. . . ."

The editor bought a kodak, and snapped me and the cart and the monuments. Every morning we went to the local chemist and paid for some blackened sheets of gelatine paper that represented his efforts of yesterday. Our landlady, with the Scriptural name of Abi, used to wonder why I treasured them.

It was also the country of the novel he was writing. I found a title for it in Milton:

With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence and judge the prize!

And I found in a tablet in the porch of Salisbury Cathedral a name for the heroine. The Lady Dionissia de Egerton de Tamville was a portrait of the Beauty at home—pining—calling for me to come back and chaperon her to balls.

So we returned to the orders and summonses and bailiffs, of which I was getting my share. For as early as February I was right up against the family. There had been murmurings even from the farthest North. My nicest sister, backed up by our Aunt Jane, was getting nervous. The ball of family sedition was set rolling by this pious lady. "And she who meant no mischief, made it all"—Aunt Jane, my mother's youngest sister, who had been the beauty of the family in her day, backed up by her godchild, whom I will call Goneril, the youngest and best-looking of ours!

My mother made Aunt Jane a yearly allowance—practically kept her out of her own earnings as a novelist in the seventies. She made it a principle not to spend my father's money on any but his own family. My mother's cheque went regularly to her every three months, signed, dated, and enclosed with a kind letter in her own large, clear handwriting. She had held a pen for many hours a day since she was eighteen, and she was now eighty. But Aunt Jane got a "scunner." Was her sister's money being as carefully husbanded as it ought to be? Aunt Jane had heard tell of expensive Morris papers at six shillings a yard being put even on to the walls of the upstairs rooms—she naturally did not see why, now that there were so many pretty, cheap papers, my mother should persist in getting up her house Pre-Raphaelite—and of slight additions from time to time . . . and, though it was only a bathroom, it was all the same an addition to *my* property. Aunt Jane did not think that I ought to "beautify my own property at the expense of my mother's income" and those who had a right to expect to inherit from her. "Beautify" was perhaps a funny word to use about such a necessary improvement, and one which Dr. Barton had ordered, too! Later on, which added to her chagrin, she heard of a sort of pantry or cloakroom added on to the ground floor, *at my own cost*. But she was not apprised of that. Perhaps I never cared to impart the knowledge. I was proud, and disdained to justify my conduct of household operations to people whom it did not immediately concern. I expected my mother to live to ninety, like her grandfather, the truculent vicar and land agent, for he doubled those parts and made history in Gainford.

And even Goneril, who possessed great rectitude when it was not obscured by passion, admitted that "I had all the trouble of Mamma!" But now, this man . . . about the house . . . an author . . . one of "Violet's queer fishes," like that editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* she brought North to stay with her godfather the Canon once. . . .

Goneril was the mother of the Beauty whom I took out, and in her fastness of Gateshead Aunt Jane had heard that I led a very giddy and godless life in London among all these artistic people. She did not at all approve of the Beauty's being allowed to visit

me perpetually, practically to live with me and go about among them. I was no sort of lion to walk beside a beautiful, innocent Una, who loved me nearly as much as she loved her own mother.

Dear little Goneril, how I loved her! Shrewd and weak, kind and capricious, cunning and silly, and very lovely, like a Gian Bellini, with deep-blue, sombre eyes that held out the message—alas! of but a small soul, askew, discomfited, and tortured—all about nothing! I explained to her that, as they had all of them gone and got married, leaving me, a bewildered, bemused authoress, to cope with the problems of the happy ending of the days of an old lady of eighty, they must really be more patient, for this difficult job nearly always falls to the spinster daughter, and, if she is decent, as I hoped I was, she is glad to undertake it. But that they should remember that it is not so nice to look after an old woman as a nice man, who may look after *you*!

I do not think that the position of such a one requires special protection. Unpaid nurse and caretaker, she can so easily do something to get herself called a rogue, and be proceeded against on some pretext or other, and, if she happens to have money of her own, may end in losing it all.

For the last month or so it had been sought to obtain powers to restrain me from perpetrating the particular kind of villainy to which the position of unofficial guardian renders liable nurses, companions, doctors even. Goneril was torn between her allegiance to me, the difficulty of co-relating the gossip she heard with known fact, and her imperfect comprehension of the various points at issue. I think it worried her into her grave. But Aunt Jane flourished on it, and I had the benefit of her prayers till 1920.

During this dreary acreage of time, fraught with the fulminations of (legal) great guns, the bursting of (police-court) mines, the stand and deliver of the Master's sessions, there was also the distressing, smaller artillery of the drawing-room. Joseph Leopold, in his preface to a book of mine, chooses war-like similes to describe our *rixes*. He liked to call us north-country litigants, "Prussians." Real Germans seem to hate Prussians and, as a good Westphalian, Prussians—*Ost-Elben*—were his detestation. He wrote bitterly of "sisters setting little devil-kites adrift in each other's

skies. . . ." He considered our family feud to be the direct outcome of the great Victorian tradition and the teaching and preaching of Godfather Ruskin. Joseph Leopold was hard and clear and probably right. But Rebecca wrote to me indiscriminately—the only true comfort:

"Cheer up! The only people who are really well treated by life are people like Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mrs. J. C. (I have never discovered why she had a down on this nice lady?) and that's too heavy a price to pay."

And I went down to Smeeth with a party, to stay with Michael Holland and my host gave me a message from Mr. Conrad—ill in bed—to the effect that he was grateful to me for "being so good to Joseph Leopold." The editor, still smarting, for me, from Mr. James's *laches*, was not particularly pleased to hear it and wrote quite sarcastically of a letter he had himself just received from his hero, blessing him in his incomings and outgoings, but "in a circumscribed sort of way; the outcome, as you may imagine, of a Polish Jew, plus lower-middle-class British Puritanism." Comic, the association of Conrad and the British middle class! And was he a Jew? Oh, nonsense! The editor was dyspeptic or riding one of his high horses that day. "It pleases me to bring these people to their knees. 'Enery will be the next, you will see."

And he was.

He wrote nice letters, too, using the military parallel which jumps naturally to the author mind when considering litigation.

"I hope your brave life is winning most of its battles. You strike me always as in the thick of the fray and I—I look at you through a hole in the curtain of a broken down ambulance—pulled off into a distant field. . . ."

And again,

My impression of your general heroism and valour is quickened by what you tell me of your situation at grim, grey Aldeburgh, where the domestic chill or blight must marry with the grey North Sea, or whatever it is, to tax all the daily resources of your genius. Very sad, tragic, insoluble, your picture, your problem, of your stricken mother, with everything else and every-

one so even more stricken by the side-wind of the blow. These are terrible mortal hours, but sit tight, hold on, and deal with them from day to day as you can; all shortened and softened by the backward perspective and you will rejoice in the thought of every patience you mustered for them. . . . Lift up your heart and flourish your pen, and believe me yours always,

HENRY JAMES.

For that little *rix*e of last year was really all 'Enery's old-maidishness of spirit. He was like the ladies of Cranford, providing themselves with umbrellas and goloshes for fear of a possible down-pour; clogs, lest they stepped into little pools of passion, dreading such effects of emotion as might subsist outside the four walls of a drawing-room and are not properly announced by the butler. He always, from that time, called me the "Purple Patch," and in 1913 he told me to "go on being one" and giving him teas at my club.

Later, ashamed of what I will call his *inburst*, he confessed to Mrs. Prothero that he "had simply kept out of it because I am too old to be mixed up in messes." He kept out of mischief by not getting into it, as old Mrs. Frank Hill used to say. The one bright spot, Mrs. Prothero said, seemed to have been that I had written and warned him that there might be a slight atmosphere of mess about me. There were several counts on which my presence in court might have been required. Supposing I had "called" him! 'Enery would have died. America might have squirmed. No, I would not bring whatever it was into the house, as one says of scarlet fever or measles. And he had dilated to Mrs. Prothero on Mary Martindale, her charm, her beauty, which gave me something nice to tell Mary, for she was always too humble. She knew 'Enery very well. He had always admired her.

He had been ill again, and I had written to enquire. He replied. I was "Dear Violet" again!

Lamb House,

February 14th, 1910.

. . . Don't measure my extreme appreciation of your most kind letter by this delay, or by these informal, invalidical signs.

I have had to wait to be able to form the latter at all presentably—after a dreary little relapse, from which I am again picking up; and my letters have to be rare and feeble scrawls of which this is a pattern. It was a charming charity in you to write, and everything you tell me a breath of your roaring London world (gracefully and considerably bedimmed a little), wafted into a sick-room that at the end of six or seven weeks has become dismally tedious. I have turned the corner (round which convalescence has kept tantalisingly hiding and staying; I'm after it—or close on its heels probably now). I am mostly sitting up *without* the prospect of tumbling back into the sheets of platitude. And I rejoice in your brave account of your own heroisms. They come to me like vague, confused strains and boom-booms of a Wagner opera—that there are women of confirmed genius who take ravenous nieces to London balls; I mean for the incredible Valkyrie air of *Götterdämmerung* of it. Mrs. Clifford tells me you have written—just published—something very strange and fine and fierce somewhere; would it overtax the shaken nerves of your enfeebled yet unconquered and all-faithful old

HENRY JAMES.

I gave a series of “afternoons.” They always amused my mother and were within her competence. As I was fastening the last hook of the Beauty’s frock upstairs I heard the voice of the editor, who was like a child before a party, looking out of the window on the stairs into the porch. It expressed the deepest satisfaction, as if all was well in the best of all possible worlds:

“Here’s James!”

Soon, settled in for the afternoon, surrounded by adoring ladies, the recluse of Rye sat complacent, holding my last new Persian kitten between his open palms, talking animatedly to the Beauty who could not talk but *looked*. He quite forgot the poor beast, which was too polite and too squeezed between the upper and the nether millstone of the great man’s hands, to remind him of its existence; and I dared not rescue it until the sentence on



MY MOTHER

which Mr. James was engaged was brought to a close—inside of half an hour.

Everybody came to me. I suppose it was the Beauty's spell. Her photograph now adorned Henry James's mantelpiece at Rye. Now, when we met at the little white club, the Beauty was with us by request. Or he would take us to a tea-shop and, next day, write pathetic, valedictory letters from Rye. "I have still the sweet taste of the Fuller tea on my tongue and in my eyes the face of that little girl. . . . And I am her aunt's very faithful, etc."

She was the only child I have ever known him notice. He actually wanted her photograph and I sent it—one of many done for the sake of her beauty by Lallie Charles, in whose atelier we seemed to live, one way or another. He thanked me, he was really glad to have it, although "no photo does much more than civilly extinguish the life and bloom (so exquisite a thing) on a happy child's face."

Health and happiness! The same charm that he found in the bonny round face of Sylvia Du Maurier. Health especially! He hated, I think, the kind of looks tolerated, admired even and perpetuated in canvases by the artists in the London circles he had just left. He has been known to describe three of them, who paid him an unexpected visit at Rye, as "faded wantons" and, when Rosamond was ill, he found an odd formula in which to congratulate me on her recovery. . . . "Glad the lovely niece met her visitation in her own bright way." For him, ill-health was really a visitation from the devil—the acquired curse of the age. "Hardy, well, people are ill nowadays. Now the very children know how to be invalids."

We rented a big garden opposite, long since built over, and we gave parties in it. At one of these I had the felicity of introducing Miss Christabel Pankhurst to Mrs. Humphry Ward, the darling Die-hard of the opposition. The Queen of our Cause was anxious to see if she could "get over her," with her puissant charm that so seldom failed. Dear, kind Mrs. Ward, to please me, consented, on the condition that Christabel did not tackle her on the subject of politics. That is how I diplomatically put it to Christabel, and she agreed to be good, but I was afraid of the sheaf of convinc-

ing pamphlets she always carried about with her on chance. She refused to lay them down—there was nowhere to lay them—but she was a woman of her word and all the while she was talking to Mrs. Ward I noticed her hands, that grasped the papers folded behind her, quivering with the effort of repression.

We had tennis in the garden nearly every afternoon while my mother, in the white Chuddah shawl that is the uniform of old-ladyhood, looked on at a foursome, say, between Mr. Hugh Walpole and Ezra Pound and two beauties, Amber Reeves and Kitty Rome. The young American poet played like a demon or a trick pony, sitting down composedly in his square and jumping up in time to receive his adversary's ball, which he competently returned, the flaps of his polychrome shirt flying out like the petals of some flower and his red head like a flaming pistil in the middle of it. Ezra, a dear, lived near us, and was in and out all day. He was very kind to the editor, and would do any sort of job for him or me, using up his intense and feverish energy in taking down winged words at dictation, or tying up my creeper for me. He would wear my Connemara cloak or the editor's old Rossetti coat—any old covering—with serenity. Wonderful young ambitious poets of his *trempe*, confirmed artists of all kinds, mingled in our courts with the wistful Walter De La Mare and the spanking Amy Lowell, the sinister but delightful Madame Strindberg with her marmosets, painters like Jacob Epstein and Wyndham Lewis and Richard Nevinson and Gaudier Brjeska. The portrait of Ezra Pound in stone by this young Frenchman still decorates my front garden, and is actually supposed to have guaranteed my immunity from German bombs during the raids. It, on the other hand, by some of the residents in that quarter, was supposed to represent a German *cache* for papers. I let them rave. It does look ghastly and terrible when the moon shines out, but it has *not* saved me from burglars.

Henri Gaudier Brjeska was quiet, ill-looking, almost toothless, wearing his blue workman's shirt, clean, on all occasions. He was a Frenchman, and liable for military service in France. They could not get him here, but, inspired by patriotism, he was always offering himself. At last he crossed over, and, without waiting

to take his luggage out of the Custom-house, went straight to the authorities. They actually arrested him as a deserter, sent him under guard to Dieppe, and put him into an empty cottage, *gardé à vue*, for the night. He escaped easily, and, returning on foot to Calais, by a lucky fluke got his luggage out of the Customs and returned to England again. He tried again, and this time they accepted him, and the Germans killed him at Neuville St. Vaast.

We were full of animals at home: the young owl, Ann Veronica, bought in Covent Garden market in the wrong month—an illicit purchase; the bulldog, given to *me* sooner than shut him up because he worried sheep; nine Persian cats and two parrots—one that I went to Charing Cross and fetched on receipt of a telegram—"Will you have the parrot or shall I kill him?"—and another with only one eye that we bought from the public house next door to save him from ill-treatment.

The shy Mr. Hudson came now and then, I veritably believe just to see Ann Veronica. He was interested in Ann (how did I know it was a lady?) and still more interested in the other birds that visited her (or him) and sometimes brought her (or him) a present. He said he had picked up many such incidents of late and meant to concern a whole chapter of his next book with the curious friendships little birds will form, in some cases, with birds of a different species, or even creatures that are not birds at all. He wanted her to be let fly, although she had a cage as big as a south coast railway-carriage, through whose mesh the white owls of Holland Park, visiting Ann, used to drop odd pieces of flesh as a present to her, for she was a very pretty little owl. She died untimely. Someone, certainly not a Holland Park owl—I do not lay it to them—gave her a breast of grouse, and the bone choked her. There was no sign of distress—but she would not eat. The vet. fetched a mouse—I turned away when it was put into the cage—but a minute later, when I turned round again, the mouse was sitting between the feet of the owl, peeping out, a black nozzle from the brownness of her feathers. Mr. Hudson was good enough to forgive me. It was, I fancy, not easy for him. But would not the other owls have torn her instead of loving her, if she had been out and about, questing, competing with them in search for food?

Cubes, pets, protégées, dinners, and dances, the latest in everything; clothes, books, plays, pictures, and ideas! Yet, *Ach, du lieber Augustin—Augustin—Augustin!* *Alles ist hin*, as we used to sing light-heartedly when we were children, waking possibly the saddest echoes in the grown-up hearts of parents and nurses even, as they danced *en ronde* with us.

All such things touch secret strings
For heavy hearts to hear.

Alles ist hin! It seemed to be. We were poised on the point of a needle, trembling in space, and all this *rémue-ménage*, this nervous gaiety, this singing of German Lieder and performing of amateur plays at the Cabaret Club under the walls covered with Wyndham Lewis's raw meat designs, this crackling of thorns under the social pot was all very well, but it wasn't life, either of the heart or the mind. Dressing for dinners and lunches, cabbing thereto, lying awake from excess of fatigue . . . I longed to get out of this pretty, tinkling, vapid prison-palace and plunge for the last time into an Odyssey-like adventure that might ultimately end in the peace of ancestral halls. Peace, too, in my heart, or what passes for my heart, which the illuminating flash of a few months ago had shown me was not dead, but still susceptible of pity and terror, which is tragedy and life.

And something did happen; the devil's cauldron that had been preparing succulent sorrows for me ever since 1908 boiled up. . . . Something that would hinder me of my prospective freedom and import stern considerations of duty into my life for a term of years, short or long. The Beauty, my innocent little adherent, was swept off in the rushing flood of calumny, removed lest she should be involved in "the sorry scheme of things," and, all unconscious, was paying her last visit to me, at least during her grandmother's lifetime.

Her grandmother's condition was parlous, not as regarded her health, fair for a woman of eighty—"a little chronic heart-disease," that was all. My mother, the friend of Robert Browning, of all the Rossettis, of Ruskin and Ford Madox Brown, who was,

as a young girl, the toast of the county, one of the wittiest women of her time, had, since my father's death, gradually gone tiresome, peevish, melancholy, irresponsible, "dothery" as she herself called it in her north-country speech. Yet she still had wonderful moments, when the poor last sum of her excellence would flash out in little stars of wit or bursts of staggering dialectic that were startling, and disturbing, but always tempered and annealed by emulcents from the deep well of tenderness that was her heart.

She had the meed of her sometimes astonishing frankness; she was a wonderful talker. And Arnold Bennett used to like to listen to her much better than talking to me or the Beauty. She and I used to sit neglected in a corner of the room playing spelicans, while my mother scintillated, destroying reputations—of a hundred years ago, *bien entendu*—with a single word, and as suddenly building them up again by a favourable anecdote, summoning up the past, the glories of the fifties in London or the vagaries of members of the old northern stock of which she came.

Her memory for old times was vivid, but it failed almost entirely to recall the minor happenings of the day before yesterday. She had one "phobia" by now—only one—the mania of approaching destitution, the dread of dwindling dividends which comes on people who in their day of power and strength have been "careful," who, all their lives, have husbanded their resources and saved their money for the good of those that are to come after them—not a modern trait! Her business instinct, once so strong, was necessarily in abeyance but, in her own phrase, it was "at the back of what I am pleased to call my mind," and she was as chary of "parting" as the most grudging of guardians could have wished. I would have to stand over her for half an hour to get her to sign a modest cheque for the butcher.

Her pass-book, which she needed not to consult, since her day of investment was over, reposed safely in the ward of her bank-manager. She banked in Durham. Now and then her lawyer, Mr. "Augusta" Webster, husband of the famous poetess, Mrs. Augusta Webster—would come to see her, and the maid was handed the key of the safe and papers were brought up on the kitchen tray. I was not present—Mr. Webster would not permit that—

so I never knew what she was after, little generousities to us children, done on the sly mostly. As a matter of fact, her largesses to me made trouble for me after she was dead. From her desk, where she kept her stamp collection carefully locked, she would sometimes take out and show me a large envelope on which was written in red ink, OUR GRAVE. It had been purchased for my father sixteen years before, and it was to be got out again in 1912. I had not thought it would have been so soon.

In her wardrobe was a parcel containing a smart nightgown and a pair of stockings for her to be buried in without which she never travelled. Sometimes she showed it to me. These demonstrations signified, peeping out, that quality in her—the northern, Valkyrie-like hardness and grimness that interested Mr. Bennett. Her wonderful figure and her beautiful hair, that D. G. Rossetti had so admired, constituted her best claim to looks, and a plateful of grey, not brown, plaits wreathed her head on the day she lay in her coffin. She had published over a dozen novels, and had been well paid for them, and had been on the staff of the *Athenæum* under Norman McColl, and of the *Spectator* under Hutton and Townsend.

This woman of parts, her mentality obscured merely by the natural incidence of age, it was now sought to restrain; in so many words—put into a cheap asylum. I contested the absurd proposition tooth and nail, but like the kid of Monsieur Séguin who “fought the wolf all night and in the morning he ate her.” . . . My puny resistance—as strong as I could make it—was overcome.

I was alone to fight them. Joseph Leopold Ford Hermann Madox Hueffer, or Joseph Leopold, as I had taken to calling him, since that strange official christening at Brixton, was absorbed in his own worries and complications. He was no manner of use. Indeed, when he had time to think about it, he desired me, for my own comfort and his, to desert, to take my hand off the helm of my mother’s affairs and leave her and her lawyers and the family to do for her and with her what they would.

What they would! I could not leave her to that fate. And my Fiduciary Position that they had forced on me was becoming too harassing for words; the hints, the accusations of peculation,

of intimidation, were ridiculous, but they hurt. I came to consider a certain concession that our dear old family doctor was advising me to make in order that my mother might remain under my charge and Goneril, under the rose, and unbeknown to Aunt Jane, was seconding him.

What the doctor wished was for me to help him to keep the matter in his own sympathetic hands, and press him to certify my mother to be, from loss of memory, incapable of managing her own affairs, and to suggest that her daughter, who had never left her for more than a month together, was the proper person to take care of her as receiver of her estate under the Court of Lunacy.

I had, in my selfish heyday, ever so little neglected her. I resolved to make up for it now. I would obey the doctor and beg to be so appointed, and, as I understood, make the sacrifice of my own liberty. For of course I could not go and live anywhere else. I must be more or less to hand, there to receive the visits of fine gentlemen, frock-coated sons of Peers coming at nine o'clock in the morning or earlier, to catch me napping and find out whether I kept my mother clean.

A nurse must be got, and I myself must be certified by a couple of respectable persons of character as competent and kind—it runs somewhat like that—and of good report in the neighbourhood in which I lived. I appealed to two unprejudiced witnesses, that is to say, not special friends of my own, to an old college friend of my father's, and with him Honorary Fellow of Corpus, Lord Courtney of Penwith, and to Mr. William Alexander of Aubrey House, where my sisters and I had played in rooms decorated by Whistler in pale, pure colours, a decorative scheme originally meant for Mr. Leyland's Peacock Room.

And, so true it is that we tend to become what the people around us would have us be, that my mother complied with her keepers, and changed from that moment, beginning to play the part assigned to her by the regents of her destiny—gentle, amiable, pleasantly wool-gathering and physically incompetent and useless. I mean that she never again lifted a finger to help herself, put on a shoe, or plait her own hair. She ceased to write or type or copy out my manuscripts for me, as she had been doing, or play vari-

ous patiences in ways invented by herself. No more roaming about the house or interfering with her own servants. The nice nurse mastered her. She stayed quietly in her own "apartments," and looked out of the window at the garden she would never tend again. In short, she began to die—the Hades-like death we decree for those whom we have feared and loved, the exercise of whose volition has proved a little troublesome to us, who are still in the swim. She had not a penny of her own, or a purse to put one in, not a postage stamp; everything she had was held by the Court for her children. She had been over-generous, in truth, but it was her own considerable earnings from literary sources that she had made free with.

She entered, as the French say, *en agonie*—into "The Time" that her friend John Ruskin had spoken of: "A time, short in happy lives—but—always a Time."

*Fate's Finger Points to Germany?—A Useful Holiday—The Mystery of Aunt Laura's Will—I write to The Countess—The Rhine Boat—Pax Germanica—Goneril and Regan fade out—Joseph Leopold's Relations—Cousin Mimi on English Wild Women and German Divorce Law—Aunt Emma desires him for the Fatherland—Family Title to be Revived—The Power of Suggestion—Nauheim—The Tzar and Tzaritza—The Kaiser's Darling—The Countess's Counsel—Joseph Leopold to Giessen—Rechtsanwalt John—The Great Resolve—Count von Aschendorf—Nationalisation—Aunt Emma's Joy—Wheels within Wheels—Marburg and the Students—International Law—Ritter Olaf—
"And I too will have on my arm someone I like very much."*

I was not yet in what lawyers call "the saddle." I desired a last flutter, and—I suppose it was Fate—the society of the little East Prussian Elizabeth and the sudden tragic and unexplained seizure of Tante Laura, the strong woman of the fifties, had given me to think, and I was growing to have an obsession—to go to Germany—of all dull places. It might have been a hunger for the sight of decently, sensibly arranged German things, German customs, German institutions, everything but German cooking. The *décor* of Germany was to me like the background of a fairy-tale—a familiar one of Grimm's. The first child's book bought for me by my mother was "Holy Grimm," as the little Burne-Jones boy used to say.

My German nurse, Milly, from Paderborn, the home of folklore and superstition, had for the time made me and my sisters into such little Germans that it was found useless to give us an order or scold us in any other tongue. French nurses at eight years old made an end of that, but I was ready to put out a very loving tentacle to the land of the Frog Prince, Trusty Henry, Rose White and Rose Red; the Stork and the Almond Tree. Moreover, Germany was the country where, in the early fifties, my father and mother, in their great need breaking through the Victorian rule

of chaperonage, both temporarily emancipated from proprieties by their morbid fear and apprehension of blindness, had escorted each other across the Channel to claim the services of the old Eye doctor who had trained Pagenstecher and Meurer, to whom mamma had recommended Rossetti. The Hofrath De Leuw was grandfather to Mrs. Haydn Coffin. His patients had colonised the village of Gräfrath. George du Maurier was one of them, and you will find a description of the little Klinik in *The Martians*.

And as for Joseph Leopold, there was his Uncle Friedrich and his Aunt Antonia and his Aunt Emma and his Cousin Mimi at Boppard on the Rhine, not a stone's throw or a German *lustige* shout from the Lorelei Rock that my father painted, not to speak of one hundred and thirty-nine Hueffers in the town of Münster alone.

"Let's go to Germany for a holiday," I said, and Fate with her finger on her lip, stood monitory—but let us go.

Why should we not beat up the German clans and find out the mystery of Tante Laura's death, and all about everything, before I was definitely tied to my mother's apron-strings?—a sheep dog, liable to be called to heel at any moment, sure to be sworn at should it venture to move independently or fail to round up its sheep properly. And, *re* Tante Laura's death, why should not Joseph Leopold go and explain to his surviving aunt, her sister, why he had been obliged by circumstances over which he had not control to take no notice of it? I am ashamed to say that I was mercenary enough to remember that there were only two shaky lives between him and a fortune, and, anyway, it would be a great adventure!

I didn't want to ask my mother to finance me, as usual, on my holiday. No, not any more. I cast about, and, no advance on a new novel being available, I sold a picture of my father's that my godfather had given me years ago and that Ruskin had admired. It nearly broke my heart to part with it, but at least it went to my father's native town; the Mayor and Corporation of Liverpool purchased it of me for the local gallery. I got a hundred and fifty pounds.

The hordes of ruffians that, on the declaration of war, poured out of Germany appeared to most English people to come from lands as far, as alien, as savage, as Timbuctoo. More's the pity! A greater inter-sympathy might have averted it. A good friend of mine, a globe-trotter, was living at Nauheim. She was a widow and at a terrible loose end, and would, I fancied, easily be persuaded to come and chaperon me. "That Freedom" I had and had had always since I began to publish; "That Chaperonage" was now a great deal more important to me. Indeed, it was a *sine qua non*. One little social slip, and for my mother the cheap asylum, and for me everlasting remorse.

We would go down the Rhine from Tilbury to Rotterdam, through Holland and Düsseldorf and Cologne, past the Rhine castles, and on to Mainz and Heidelberg, where the students fight. We would sleep and eat on the boat, going on shore wherever we stopped if it seemed good to us.

So it was settled, and the Countess was written to. She agreed, delighted, and would meet us at Tilbury. No more unchaperoned would I be, however virtuous. I was too old to be a New Woman. She was an ideal old lady. She had neither temper nor temperament. No initiative, like an easy-chair in the room. It would be a delightfully lazy trip and soothe our nerves, all on edge since "Blood upon the Buttercups." The boat would go very slowly; we would be sitting, reading, eating, talking, singing if we chose, on the upper deck, looking down on the lower where they would be loading and unloading cargo. We should never know when or how long they were going to stop, but we knew that we should spend a night moored to the pier at Cologne. And we should get off for good at Assmanshausen, where this good German—or was she an Austrian?—had engaged us rooms. Joseph Leopold had written to the relations at Boppard and bidden them wave a white tablecloth, just as Ruskin used to do for us children when we were rowed across the lake from Coniston to Brantwood.

There were amusing people on the boat, too. There was a large mass of flaccid tenor who bore the name of one of Europe's prime operatic favourites. He never left the dining-room, but lay there covered in shawls, as if he had been poured out, from meal

to meal. Aubrey Beardsley's lovely mother, all turquoises and lace, ran about the decks and talked German. There was a nice little band at one end of the upper deck. . . .

As we passed the Lorelei Rock all the Germans except the tenor, who was Italian, and not on deck, broke into: "*Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten . . .*" I was also *traurig*, and a thought would not go out of my mind. . . . I had had a letter from home.

Law—I won't call it justice exactly, but certainly blind, like her—had taken the occasion of my absence to smite a poor old woman of eighty to whom sorrow had only left eyes to weep and to read with, and susceptibilities frayed by years of use but still vivid enough to be hurt. My maid had written to tell me that yesterday my mother's lawyer had sent his chief clerk to South Lodge with a summons. Mr. Lane had been chosen probably because of his sympathy with my mother and me and all those on whom, for one reason or another, tribulation had found a billet. He was a man so kind and understanding that when poor Wilde, another on whom the hand of the law lay heavy, had been brought up from Reading to appear *re* his bankruptcy, the grateful poet had given him, in gratitude for his *petits soins*, an original manuscript poem of two stanzas which I had had the pleasure of selling for him to Robert Ross, who collected, as everyone knows, any existing scrap in this author's handwriting. It was this Mr. Lane's duty to penetrate into my mother's chamber and, in pursuance of it, rehearse to her a document which informed her that she was "a person who, through mental infirmity arising from age, was incapable of managing her own affairs . . ." and that if she objected to such an order being made she must sign such objection and file it at the office of Master Theobald within three clear days at the Royal Courts of Justice.

Eighty years of age, and anxious to manage *anything*! But dividends will come in and cheques will go out, and wastage may go on forever. . . . Presents she could still give. . . . She must not. . . .

What a mockery! For, supposing that the poor lady did with all her heart desire to protest, how could she have been certain of procuring the machinery to do so? Her rheumatic fingers could

not hold a pen, and a nurse, schooled by guardian angels, might refuse to take a letter down at dictation. And where would be her purse, unused for years, and would it have a stamp in it and, even supposing she could have managed to write and send such a letter to the proper quarter, would it be accepted as against the opinion of the doctor who certified her?

Lane told me afterwards that never, in the whole course of his engagement as clerk to my mother's solicitors, had he performed any task so repugnant to him. He said when he was introduced into the room as a visitor he hardly dared to tell the calm, dignified, clear-speaking old lady that she was a mad woman, for that was what it practically amounted to; that she had listened patiently to his mumbling of the summons, and only said, when he had quite finished, that there was a gentleman in the house whom she could consult and would like to have come to her. She meant Joseph Leopold, whom she was fond of because he had "a voice like his grandfather." But he was at that moment getting on to the Rhine boat at Rotterdam! Then disappointed, Mr. Lane said, she sat still and made conversation with him instead of dismissing him as he deserved to be dismissed. And the nurse told me afterwards that my mother was really bitterly offended and hurt all the time, and cried for three days, reproaching her children and reviling them, as King Lear reviled, but less gently, his Regan and Goneril. "And Janey!" she kept saying. She had not seen her sister Jane for twenty years.

And that was what made me so *piano* going down in the pleasure-boat, with the little orchestra at the prow accompanying the Germans, who broke out into lusty song, singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* as they went past Duisberg and Düsseldorf and Crefeld. Factories with their belching chimneys—all the material of wealth—set down squat in level pastures where the placid, red-backed cows stood knee deep in grass, pushing through the reeds to drink. The colours of everything, since Rotterdam, were not positively distasteful but raw and strident, as they always are in Germany—like a Holman Hunt picture. Nothing "pretty-pretty" anywhere. The mentality of Germany always suggests to me a harsh voice, a loud colour, a blatant gesture, a sentence spoken in a bar or on

a racecourse. But over all a peace, self-evident, that does not by any means pass understanding, for it is the peace of good sense and a good digestion—the lotus eaters, satiate with some sedative, as potent and less poetical than the herb that Hermes gave!

The boat moved very slowly. With a *Schleier* over my hair—for it is not considered decent for a Frau or a Fräulein to uncover their heads out of the house—I sat on the long slats that made the seat under the white rim of the boat, and looked out and thought inward, while Joseph Leopold played patience and conceived romances. Floating along thus, we seemed a part of, and made one with, this complaisant, weighty and seriously gliding vessel that was more like him than me. I saw that the grind of our opposite temperaments, forced together into the long, long fight that common existence is, would produce its own peculiar form of erosion. Of course we both had faults, each of us the one or two skyscraping ones, but these, so far, were held in check—kept well in hand in the gallant attempt to make a good thing of it. We two—who were to “rule the world,” in lover’s parlance—must do our best to make our own corner of it healthy. I must manage to play up properly to a genius, and, as a hardy motorist once said to me, “not clutter up the brake!” Good books were to be written and money to be made—oh, the pity of it! For the urge of that necessary materialism may be a spur to talent but is death to genius, as I conceive of genius. A wage-earner and father of a family must not waste time over style, unless it comes naturally, or be cross at luncheon because he has spent the whole morning in finding *le mot juste*.

And character will peep in. I had not realised that this particular genius liked everything arranged for him except his recreations and expected, like the Psalmist, to have “his feet set in a large room,” the desk of life laid out for him with pen, papers and rubber bands and all literary conveniences. So that, having made known to an obedient family his determination not to be interfered with, he could shut the door on writs and duns, bores and viragos, refusing to be confronted with any of the problems that beset an author unfortunately doubled with a man. He refused absolutely with his intellect to face them, preferring to oppose to

+ Hans Holbein; the book, that was begun under much sorrow, we read it with the greatest interest. Mimi sends her love to both of you, she is happy to possess a new Grenchen, a sweet little thing, the former having been killed by a cruel auto. last summer. - May the soon beginning year lead you to the villa Goesen.



AUNT EMMA'S HOUSE AT BOPPARD

adverse circumstances the fleshy back that an Egyptian slave might bend to the lash of an overseer. He would bear quite meekly, like the "exceedingly patient donkey" to which his father had compared him in boyhood, the weals of fate, or, like a German of to-day, go about his business quietly under the occupation of the Ruhr.

But I am different. I won't bear things unless I have to. I have to live always in the boiling middle of things or, to mix metaphors, in a world of thin ice and broken eggs that will never make an omelette. It seems to be my fate always to be up against people who prefer solvency to sentiment and pawkiness to passion. Despite my fighting spirit, through prudent instincts transmitted to me by the mother I have described, I make ridiculous attempts to placate the powers, "going round behind" as it is called, but quite boldly and above board, sitting down on the hornet's nest, stealing into the camp of the enemy, and offering desperate and romantic concessions. It is never any good, but I have done it. It is as if Don Juan were to go offering cups of tea to the statue of the Commandant in order to persuade him not to come down! I was always one that, refusing to notice when the signals were against me, made haste to the rendezvous that is to bring down misfortune on my head.

But meantime the Rhine was very wonderful. It was the first big river I had seen, and knocked our little Thames ditch into smithereens. . . . We went ashore at Cologne and dined, and I went to a beer-garden for the first time, and drank, or pretended to drink, a tankard of *kleines helles*, while Joseph Leopold had three of *grosses dunkles*. So on board again, and to bed.

At about seven next morning I woke, and heard the *clapotement* of water as usual at the side of my narrow bed. As we gently fared along, the white light of morning came in at the little port-hole window. I looked out. Deep called to High, and no man saw but I, for all the world was asleep except, presumably, the man at the helm who was guiding this commercial craft along the cañon between two cliffs—the passage between Rolandseck on one side and the Drachenfels on the other. The delicate golden beams

lit up a panorama which, like a picture hung on a wall in a lonely gallery, seemed to have been waiting all these years for my British eye to rest on. For the Rhine is Germany's achievement, like a national air or a national statue or a national Church builded of her own masons. The Rhine is her national *Aussicht*, of which the nation that put up the *Germania* in a moment of artistic forgetfulness, has yet the gumption to be proud. We went slowly between the cliffs, like walls where green vines, closely packed, crawled up to summits tipped with castles, hoary and brown, the robber strongholds of the dreadful past. The verdure slung like a curtain down from the sky . . . like a hanging garden, to the edge of the water that passed along evenly in pride of power and strength, its dark flow delving into scarped banks, its glancing ripples breaking up the level blackness near the middle, where I was being borne along through the gateway of Horn into the land of my dreams and *Pax Germanica*. It all faded out—the stale horror, like beer spilled on public house tables, of Aunt Jane, Regan and Goneril, Brixton and Charing Cross, lawyer's clerks and affidavits, and statements that seem to state nothing.

The relations did not hang out the table-cloth for the very good reason that they had not been advised of our arrival, but, as the boat swung round the curve of Boppard, Joseph Leopold pointed out to me the little villa and its garden, box-and-laurestinus-bordered, for all the world like one in Addison Road or St. John's Wood, where Aunt Emma lived, and Mimi her invalid daughter and Carolina her cook. There was the usual pleached walk along the shore where I should walk with Mimi. There was one in every village we had passed, but this was a very fine one.

We got ourselves out of the Freiligrath room into the annexe and carried her with us. It was much nicer than the old historic hotel. The annex had clear, clean, straight passages, a strip of matting in the middle, into which light, high rooms opened; clear, pale, bedroom china, the decorations sensible, chaste, appropriate, with no old-fashioned nonsense about them—perhaps a *soupeçon* of *art nouveau*—and under one's large, gracious windows all the time the ripple of the Rhine, and on the nether shore the ferryman in his boat, moored in midstream. . . . At night we wan-

dered in the white road, all bordered with vines and the slim, sliding rails, well lubricated, that do not hinder the fox at his thievish work. "Take us the little foxes—the little foxes that devour the vines——" Yes, we smelt them. . . .

There is room, or they make room, for a single line on either side of the river. The object of this is of course utilitarian, but the train, with its bulldog breast and following of lighted carriages rattling by on the opposite bank, reminds one less of modern civilisation than of the Worm of German legend with his tail of gold. Behind us are the woods of the Eiffel, one of the great silent forests of Germany, birdless for lack of water, so desperate their *Noth* that, like the deer and the wild boar, these little creatures have to come for a drink all the way to the river that is threading the woods of enchantment on its way to touch at the noisy centres of commerce.

Terrible, unblest wildernesses, stretching back and back, holding God knows what in their depth—witches, robbers, and wild beasts. As you walk you can hear the boughs cracking. But as for human beings, you can walk all day without meeting a *Förster*, in his grey-green clothes, or a charcoal burner, stooping over his fire that reddens the boles of the big trees.

Next day I went, as suggested, by myself and called on Frau Emma G—— and her daughter in the earwiggy little villa half way up the hill. I rang the bell, and it was answered by the spare, aged woman I had been told to expect.

"*Ist es Carolina?*" I murmured persuasively.

The *gnädige* Frau was indisposed, but the *Fräulein* was in, and entertained me. I took her to tea at the hotel as I had been told to do, for it would be a tremendous jaunt for her. I found Mimi the most sentimental of the sentimental, as charitable as it was possible to be. She went once a week with a basket, covered with a white cloth, containing delicacies for the sick poor of Boppard, and once a week in the steamer as far as the Lorelei Rock and back, and joined in the chorale, weeping and feeling better when she came home. And so she did when I told her of Joseph Leopold's illness, of my own, and of the sorrows we had both under-

gone. I did not tell her about Brixton—too strong meat for the babe of life that is the German *Alt-Mädchen*!

Mimi G. read poetry and my books, but with difficulty—much less difficulty than that with which I spoke German. I have wondered how much we each made each other understand. It was more a matter of sympathy than anything else, though, after a few meetings, I had taken some sort of stock of her mentality and knew what would “fetch” her. She was too careful of appearances to come to Assmanshausen—my very chaperon frightened her, being unfortunately a *divorcée*. She preferred that I should come to her, and she was anxious that I should see the various viewpoints that abounded in the district. They all have a little tea-house. German women will climb and perspire nobly for any view-point, even one that they know like the palm of their hand. We all four went together—I was the only “quite English” member of the party—in the *Zahnradsbahn* up to the famous *Aussicht* at Fleckhardt’s Höhe. It rained. On getting out of the funicular with two large sets of German natives I had the prospect of a three-mile tramp before me, and murmured at it. The women of the other parties sneered at the man of ours.

“*Er ist unter den Pantoffel*,” they observed, as we turned to go down again. Thus they marked their national disapproval of the craven male and betrayed the attitude of German women generally to Him who must *Not Obey*, whoever he may be—father, husband, lover, *soupirant* or no relation at all.

Mimi, a lady who in England would have corresponded to the squire’s daughter of a village parish, was in Germany something of a *femme forte* with traditions of free thinking. Quite definitely an old maid, whose reading was not censored, she had read all about the struggle for the emancipation of women in England, though she was canny enough never to have worried her mother or the other Hueffers about it. She begged me now to tell her about women’s suffrage as soon as she heard I had taken part in it and that her distinguished cousin had condescended to write a pamphlet in women’s favour.

She had read—and I told her she had read it all wrong—of suffragettes stopping the carriage of the Prime Minister and pulling

his beard (Mr. Asquith had none to pull), of wild women strapping themselves to large and impossible things like the Clock Tower or the Monument and refusing to come away; of the virago Christabel, riding on a meek, white horse, like the Lady Godiva, into Westminster Hall. But not the slightest glimmering of the object of it all had ever entered her head. When I told her that as long ago as 1885 a friend of mine, Lord Carlisle's daughter, had, at her wedding, refused to pronounce the word "obey," she asked me, horror-stricken, if *der Herr* had not abandoned her and left the church at once? When I told her that the Herr was of the same mind as his beloved, and that the bride's uncle, officiating, had allowed his niece to mumble her responses so that no one could be sure of what she said, Mimi, getting used to the idea, shrewdly observed that it was a pity the Lord's daughter had left out the only thing she could honestly promise to do, since loving and honouring are dependent on the future conduct of the parties.

Marriage was a matter of behaviour, Joseph Leopold then told us and averred that in the Fatherland a husband can divorce his wife for nothing but disobedience. Mimi did not contradict him, but said that disobedience was *ganz schrecklich*, and cut to the very roots of society. He pressed her for a definition of Disobedience. "Oh, almost anything!" she said—neglecting one's husband, abusing him. . . . A man she knew had divorced his wife just because she would persist in wearing colours that were distasteful to her lord. I said that this showed how low the status of women in Germany must be, when any stick would do to beat a lap-dog with, and Joseph Leopold said that it amounted to an admission that what both the parties wanted was what the law wanted them to have. In fact, Collusion!

Mimi was a little outraged, but I patted Germany on the back—as, indeed, I think she deserved to be patted if Joseph Leopold spoke true—and began to tell her of the law of divorce with us and the absolutely indispensable grounds for it. Mimi shuddered. What German Frau was ever unfaithful? How on earth should she be? The minor peccadilloes were grounds enough. And for a wife to divorce her husband, that was *censé* never to happen! It would be too much honour for the lap-dog.

I saw that the German mentality with regard to this important relation of man and woman had stopped at the Fairy-tale period, when the King raised a pyre for the Swan Maiden he had married and whom he presumed to be unfaithful, so that her Seven Brothers had had to come and rescue her just as she was set alight—flapping the fire out with their large white wings. Yes, Mimi had a long way to go before she could join the W.S.P.U. I tried her with some of the anomalies of our so constipated divorce law. The injustices to women involved, which was what we suffragettes were up against and would alter when we got the vote—such as the custody of the children vested in the husband, his right to decide whether her child and his should or should not be vaccinated or brought up in this or that religion, the tyranny of the dead hand; the husband's right to appoint a guardian for the children she had borne over the wife's head—that all seemed to Mimi perfectly just and reasonable. *Ein Mann muss seine Kinder selbst erziehen*. But when I gave her a concrete instance—what had happened to my friend, Mrs. Bernard Cato, who joined the Catholic faith some years after her marriage, so that Bernard Cato had exercised his right to take two children under ten out of her care, leaving the baby, whom she was allowed to keep until it was a year old—Mimi wept.

Marriage, a tyranny tempered by divorce, which should be used freely as being the only way in which people could bear it! "Marry early and marry often," as George Boughton used to say when he was painting Milton in the garden of Chalfont St. Giles's, dictating dull stuff to his third wife. But of course I did not dare to make these ribald jokes to Mimi, religious *en diable* as she was. Catholics do not accept divorce as we understand the marriage. They scorn it. But, then, nothing is easier, it seemed to me, listening to her, than for Catholics to get one good enough for their needs for pounds, shillings, and pence, and under another name—Dispensation—to annul it.

One way or another the Church must reign, the Church could do anything that seemed good to it or expedient.

Mimi was awfully pleased to hear that the children had been brought up as good Catholics in an expensive school by the sea,



DAVID GARNETT AND JOSEPH LEOPOLD AT
ASSMANSHÄUSEN

where the Mother Superior was an English lady of title, and the training, apart from religious teaching, would fit them to take their place in the best and proudest English society—extras, calisthenics, needlework, dancing, drawing, and I don't know what else. I had seen them all set forth at great length, together with the holiday fund and the bill for clothing that the father had paid that very morning.¹ I knew that this expensive paradise in which his daughters lived was the joy of his heart—the blue ribbon of his career—far more important to him, even, than the attainment of *le mot juste*. It was practical, too. His Aunt Emma fully approved of his attitude and of the expensive presents that he procured for his girls and sent them on their birthdays—a whole peasant's costume from Marburg costing fifteen pounds had gone to one and a free-wheel bicycle to the other, with a violin to follow. . . .

"You must always take good care to preserve the love and duty of these dear children *with good gifts!*" the old aunt had written.

Mimi, in gratitude to me for the care I took of her cousin, ended by showering romantic tenderness on me. I often wonder what became of the household at the villa at Boppard in the war; did Carolina's excellent stews suffer from rationing, as ours did? Did Mimi, her love turned to bitterness, leave her belligerent cousin out of her prayers and mention him only in her Morning Hate?

The Great Catastrophe perforce severed Joseph Leopold's connection with the Fatherland. For, of course, they all heard that he had repudiated his newly gained nationality. This gesture had been taken by them as a great compliment. But he had afterwards gone and sworn allegiance to King George, obtained a commission, and was fighting against them. I never heard of any of them again after that, except once at the Cabaret Club, when Joseph Leopold, through a mistake of one of the waiters, was fetched up from the cellar, where we all were listening to Frank Harris's *Yellow Ticket*, to deal with an angry wife out for arrears of alimony—the wife of one of the Dutch Hueffers who had seen the name on the club register and thought she had fairly got him.

¹ See Appendices.

A breath of England at the Krone! One day two very young men, faring on foot to Switzerland—dear Dollie Radford's son and his friend, David, the son of Edward and Constance Garnett. The beardless future author of *Lady into Fox* stayed to breakfast with us, and passed onward down the Rhine. From Brienz he wrote that he was sending me a tortoise—it was on its way, and he hoped it would get to me before I left. It is, for all I know, still on its way, for the Countess, anxious to get back to the hectic joys of her cure at Nauheim, forced us there.

How different that was! The deep, conscious strength of the Rhine flow, the silent forest where, if you walked for the day, you met only the kindly *Förster* with the feather stuck in his cap, was exchanged for a plot of villa residences and gardens where people lazed about holding glasses connected with their mouths by celluloid funnels. For the Countess and me a smart hotel—Bittong's—a *Kur*-intentioned place where salads were made without vinegar and you drank water or, at the best, *Faschingen*. For Joseph Leopold, some Hotel Alexandre or other, but he ate with us, and called, as it seemed to be understood he would do, every morning at Bittong's for one or the other of us ladies, was inducted into the bedroom of either—announced by a smart *chasseur* in blue. This would have upset my mother's guardians considerably if they had come to hear of it. But, as a matter of fact, there was no proper lounge at Bittong's; the hall, in which we all congregated five minutes before dinner, was draughty.

One evening a notice was posted up begging the guests not to pursue, persecute, or mob the Tzar of Russia, who was staying at Friedberg, three miles off, and who came in every day with the Tzaritza and her children. Poor Alix of Hesse, mortally ill, had turned as a last resource to the healing waters of her native province and her husband had complained that the Nauheimers followed him and her about and stared. This would, if continued, prevent him from coming to that place. It must be stopped. It was.

There was more than fear of mobbing; there was the fear of the bomb. He went in danger of his life so obvious and so imminent that the craven and business-like municipality of Friedberg

had insisted on his insuring the public monuments of that place at his own expense!

It was his chamberlain's duty to disseminate fallacious announcements of his movements. When he was supposed to be going to the baths it was at the *Kursaal* you would find him; when it was the riding school it was much more likely to be the lake. I have seen him there, a disconsolate figure, encouraging his boy to sail his tiny boat or being rowed about in one. I certainly never mobbed him. In the same accidental way I often saw the Tzaritzza, in black with pearls, going in and out of the baths, her face a tragic mask, stupid, incompetent, haughty, dejected. She looked a lovely fool; nay, hardly lovely now—the morbid shadow of a queen. And once I saw him through the windows, like glass walls, of a shop full of Venetian glass, Japanese *netsuke*, and plaques of green jade. The shopman was showing him some *objet d'art* or other, and the Tzarewitch, whose head did not come up to the counter, was with him. No one else. The door of the shop had been left open, and some sensible German passer-by had shut it. Nicholas II looked up and out—he thought he was trapped! I saw his face through the beautiful clear glass; it did not exhibit mere terror, for he was a brave man, but all at once it seemed implicit with a summing-up, a *résumé* of the composite agony of all this race of kings consciously marked down for destruction. His grandfather before him—his uncle—and only the little son with his head below the counter to carry on the monstrous imposthume of Russian Royalty!

There was also a Regnant Grand Duke—he of Hesse-Darmstadt—a relation of the King of England, his features *très en Edouard*, as I could see. I was introduced to him by Count Lelöf-fel, one of the “favourite officers of the Kaiser” with which this place abounded. The Duke's palace at Giessen he had turned into a barracks, and now, having divorced his wife easily for incompatibility, he dissipated the rents of his dukedom, playing bridge daily in the tented verandah of the *Kursaal* or in the parterre, among the red geraniums, the blue caps of the bandsmen and the variegated toilettes of the Americans, the *cocottes* and the professional beauties. He expected to be asked out to dinner there by some or other

of these every night, and was. Joseph Leopold and I used to get up early and go there for a walk among the laurels and rhododendron hedges in the gentle grey autumn mornings. Then it was deserted even of waiters, all engaged in washing up, dawdling, mock-busying themselves, holding themselves in reserve till midday, when the band would rustle into its place and the little striped red tablecloths were spread on the little tin tables.

Lelöf, whom I distinguished with difficulty—for German officers look very nearly alike—was what we should call in England “a card”! He was supposed to have hurt himself rather badly at polo, performing before the Kaiser, and this was the *chic* cause of his presence at Nauheim. The Kaiser was given out to be excessively anxious about the health of this tall, spare, eager, wasp-waisted creature. In the course of three days I both obliged and insulted Lieutenant Lelöf, and I wondered, if another day in revenge for the latter, he would come to spit one of my friends on the point of that everlasting sword that hangs always at the side of gentlemen of his kidney, and when they sit down beside you on the most pacific occasions trails awkwardly on the ground between. At least, I was told that I had insulted him when I declared that German officers were *not always* polite to ladies in the street, and how I had been driven off the side-walk twelve years ago by an officer at Wiesbaden, who had absolutely treated me as if I did not even occupy the very small space on the path that I was surely entitled to. Lelöf bent his weary, small eyes with their red rims on me, and, saying haughtily, “*Wie, Fräulein? Sie sagen . . . ?*” laid his hand on the hilt of his sword. I felt it stir between us. But the Countess, who was sitting at the same table, interposed, and said that the German of the Fräulein was uncertain . . . the Fräulein had not meant . . .

And I obliged him. He was admiring, not to say following, in the Allee every morning a young American lady who was staying, not at my hotel, but at that of Mrs. T. P. O'Connor. She had a pale, clear-cut face and firm chin, lifting out of the white jabot of her tailor-made, and neat ankles—a change for Germany!—in high-heeled shoes with a big bow on the instep.

"It is that I admire," said Lelöf. "It is so well tied—as if it would never come undone."

I soon got him an introduction to his enchantress, but the affair came to nothing. To the so spiritually minded favourite of the Kaiser The Dream was more than The Business. . . . But I had made good reparations, and he even wrote to me after he got home. His letter was an extraordinary document, and not at all the letter I should have associated with a German officer. It seemed quite mad!

I think the German military mind was already, in those days, beginning to be "above itself." I am sure it had been, as Disraeli said of another form of decadence, "well guanoed" with all sorts of morbid imaginings, moral and military. Socially it was rottenish. Mr. Fortescue told someone I knew that the scandalous novels on which they were gloating over there in the Fatherland would have been seized in England. They were, when they were translated. See that novel by the great Sudermann which the late bold John Lane published—a truly wonderful psychological study which would have gained the wrong sort of readers because of its biblical name, but which was hardly out before it was withdrawn from circulation. Or read Lieutenant Bilse's *In einer kleinen Garnison*, a copy of which the slinky, rather bestial, and exceedingly vain author presented to me specially bound with silver clasps when he came to my garden-party in 1906. Lelöf was probably a superior specimen of the race that was growing up in Germany, corrupted by the evil communications of such novels as I have described and the moral and military divagations of Bernhardt and Treitschke. Such sadic cruelty as was perpetrated by the flower of Germany's manhood in 1914 was, I imagine, less the outcome of beer and innate brutality than of absinthe and a creeping paralysis of moral ideas. They were all, at least, potential Ludwigs of Bavaria.

I had always thought till those days of the Law as a free thinker or a sectarian might consider of the priesthood of a State religion in which he did not participate, and would never, D.V., need to—an establishment that did what it liked with its own and took occasion to nag, plague, rack, and sometimes to make *autos da fé*

of persons who, coming under its control, controverted its doctrines and disobeyed its decrees. But that is, of course, if one was fool enough to consult it, put oneself into its hands! Old-fashioned people used to say, "Always settle out of court. Never go to law if you can help it." But how if *Law* comes to you? Courts were made to be kept out of, but how if other people take you into them? I had never imagined myself or any of my family coming within a hundred miles of court. And now I was under the law, a frequenter of its ugly, cock-eyed, dingy palace that had been actually designed by my father's friend, George Edmund Street, and gained him a knighthood—prone to suffer goodness knows what scrapings of one's vanity, digs of opposing counsel; lifting of the lid of one's heart, its piteous loves and inchoate hatreds disclosed under the low arch of heaven whence came no sort of help!

One had read *Phantastes* and had a sense of wandering in a forest at night, or knocking oneself against the boles of malignant, half-humanised trees, one's face stung by the lashes of savage boughs, stumbling over snags, falling into the pits and gins that man lays for man, entanglements—unfortunate phrases—the Wood of the World!

There were compensations, of course. There were amenities, from the enemy's camp. The Beauty still wrote sweetly to the editor, discussing the parish reading club that was now "on" the *Odyssey*, after Sir Walter Scott's *Rokeby*.

There were sweet and fallacious letters from Mary Martindale and wise and sensible ones from her horse-breaker Aunt Stringer. Mrs. Stringer was a great stand-by till a horse broke *her*—fell on her and killed her.

Even Goneril—dear little Goneril that I loved—sneaked a letter to me now and then, sermonising me, calling me a thief and a liar, as her way was, but containing vague aspirations for an improvement in our relations if I would confess my errors and be clean. The Receivership plan was going to placate everybody. . . .

The time drew near when I must go home for it. And I wanted so much to see Marburg and the potters making pots on the high-road, and the students that fight, letting other students slice off the

tops of their crowns like an orange so that they can exhibit the scar. The Countess was willing and we were to go on Thursday to the Hotel Zum Ritter, on the Elizabethen Platz, and I should see plenty of blue-ribbed crowns.

But before Thursday—and I did not know how fateful a day it was—bidden by the Countess who was deeply interested in us, Joseph Leopold took the train to Giessen, a university town half an hour away, and returned in time for dinner, when he told us, looking as portentous as might be with his mild blue eyes, that we *would* all go on Wednesday to Marburg as arranged and leave *him* there behind us. He was going to stay on in Germany.

He had taken one of those sudden resolutions, those sudden burgeonings of resolve, poison flowers that blow in a single day out of a concealed and tedious growth of dull misgiving, daily distastes, and nightmare apprehensions. The root of this flower was a sense of injustice and injury; Brixtons, hecklings, humblings and lowerings of natural pride had manured it; secret tears had watered it and brought it to the birth.

Some minds—not mine—move very slowly and nourish quietly, until it is very strong, a grim determination to do something foolish, the madder the merrier—or the sadder! Something justifiable, but not as the world goes, for poetical justice is, in the eyes of the law, the least valid of excuses, the most cogent in those of the layman, and, in the long run, most tragic, ineffectual, and irrevocable.

But to my distracted soul it seemed to imply an end to the law's lawful chicane, delays, and prétermisions, of tedious interim orders, worrying petitions, irritating reports, of plank beds and prison loaves, the dread of the knock of the postman or process server, the moral and mental discomfort that is the bane and impediment of masterpieces. Joseph Leopold, as he said himself in *Ancient Lights*, was "an Englishman a little mad about Good Letters." Good Letters, in the Flaubertian sense, were to him more important than king or country, wife or mistress.

For my state of mind at this juncture Joseph Leopold's simile—"a sparrow hopping about among the horses' hoofs"—would seem to be fairly correct, though humiliating. Or say the Little Tailor

of Grimm, who got out of most things and many tight places because he was so small.

The way I understood and accepted what Joseph Leopold was going to do is best shown by some letters I wrote about this time to René Byles, who was, at this moment, in London, occupying Number 84, sending on letters and being general *souffre-douleur* to us both.

Byles was sure to disapprove, being a true-born Briton, a hater of all foreigners—he was capable of calling a Frenchman “mounseer,” and if he met a Japanese in the street when walking with me, would pull me out of the way lest I rubbed shoulders with him—of foreign books, foreign cookery, foreign laws and customs. The odd thing about Byles—and perhaps what made him so charming—was that he had lived half his life in Japan, and that his middle name, as well as his brow and nose, bespoke him of Norman origin. The De Beuzevilles were Huguenot refugees from the severities of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Sometimes, to tease him, I would bring up the slaughter by Huguenots of Catholics in the barn at Vassy, when he alluded to the massacre of St. Bartholomew. But where he disapproved he helped, and he was a good fighter. Every journalist remembers the row over *The Times* Book Club. Blessed be his memory!

But, so little does one know of the kinks in the cranky old chain of Providence, that my best friends would find it impossible to imagine that his help was to prove my hindrance. However, for us he fought and slaved to the very end, till one day—a sheeted ghost in the Hydro at Richmond, with pale arms flung out of bed where the blood had retreated right up to the elbow and would retreat still further—the White Death (as I would call the disease he suffered from) took him. Until he was too weak, and after—I never got such a talking to as on the last time I saw him!—he spoke his mind to me. He tried to be a slipper on the wheels of the coach that, through untried ways, was rolling on to disaster.

Hard-bitten, never very genial, thin, without an ounce of superfluous or even enough flesh on his body, extremely severe, cold and cynical sometimes, like the man of Northern France he was, he did

not mince facts, as when he exhorted me gently: "not to place so much reliance on perennial charm."

I wrote from Marburg:

He has gone, by the advice of his Aunt Emma, who is naturally anxious to secure the continuance of the stay of such a great man and to acquire his name for Germany, to a place called Giessen, half an hour from here by train. The Countess has told him of a clever German lawyer there. He went and unearthed him only yesterday, and he is at present busily engaged in getting papers translated. I wish I could read German. The annoying thing is that I am rather ill and due home, while I fancy from what he says, F. will have to stay on in Germany for six months in order to get it through, unless, indeed, he makes such a good impression in a month that the authorities feel inclined to declare him a German through his father's naturalisation in 1872. We are quite friends here with the Grand Duke of the particular State to which he will belong.

Byles must have been puzzled. I had to write and explain that the father of Joseph Leopold, Franz Hüffer, who shook the dust of the Fatherland off his feet and came over to England in the seventies (it seemed, at first, merely to edit the Tauchnitz edition of Rossetti's poems and play backgammon with him) had, after marrying the daughter of Ford Madox Brown, taken out naturalisation papers which might or might not have included his unborn children.

The dear conceited Germans, you see, do not allow a whimsical father by one rash act to deprive his children of the inestimable advantage of German citizenship, and the Government makes it as easy as possible for them to resume it. They have only to *se donner la peine* of acquiring domicile and getting the burgomasters of some particular German town to accept them as persons likely to be good townsfellows and rich enough to pay their rates regularly. . . . I am going to buy an Ulmer dog here at Cappel, and bring it home. I don't know what my maid will say. God knows how many more responsibilities I am

going to take up! Will you be very kind and see about quarantine rules for me? One does so wonder what is going to be the end of it all?

God knows, indeed! The sparrow hopping about among the horses' hoofs. Quarantine regulations—Naturalisation—Ulmer dogs—International law—and much else!

Indeed, there seemed to be going to be an end of me that month at Marburg. "Blood upon the Buttercups" indeed! My vision at Selsey this very spring, and the queer and beautiful poem which Joseph Leopold, quick to seize any artistic material, had written, with that for the *clou*, in June. I remembered it in these days when I seemed to be bleeding to death, and the doctor from the Klinik went into the matter. The Countess was giving him an account of my symptoms. "Up at Markese's last night, *plötzlich sie schwindelt*." It sounded to me as if she was accusing me of fraud. Here in Germany, as well as at home! Dr. Bauereisen said gently, in a voice far softer than his hands, that the *gnädige Fräulein* must be operated on at once—costing nine pounds at the Klinik. I said that that was quite impossible, that I had engagements in England, and that he must mend me up for a week, say, when I would go home and get it done there—for twenty-one pounds, as it turned out. I was put to bed, and fed on *Suppe mit Ei*. Bauereisen was clever, for soon I was sitting up in bed and Joseph Leopold was dictating to me his memoirs, for which I found a name, and a bad one, as it turned out.

The last chapter of it is full of Heine and idealism. The death of the Ritter Olaf, who ran away with the King's daughter and had his head cut off by the lady's father for his pains. But what cared he? He was allowed his wedding night! He dies at midnight by the light of torches, blessing the sun, blessing the moon, the violets, and the blue eyes of his wife!

I suppose I was cantankerous, for I fell foul of a phrase in the last chapter, when the Author, "a little mad about Good Letters"—a little, good Lord!—fancies himself arrived in his author's heaven at last, wandering among green trees and coloured lamps, listening to the whisperings of a happy crowd—his eternal desideratum—

blest I, as well as him, wandering with their beloveds—"And too, will have on my arm someone I like very much. . . ."

Well, Bauereisen mended me, and the Receivership business was put off, and as Joseph Leopold liked to have me on his arm, I stayed on a little. . . .

The autumn was far advanced, and the walks down to Cappel to see the dog, to the horse fair at Warmund, up to the Wilhelms-thurm to watch the Kermesse, the slim little peasant girls, nearly bald at fifteen, dancing in costume, with Berlin woolwork sashes in violent futurist colours round their waists or where their waists . . . ? consuming between the dances the contents of the heavy beer-barrels which, in preparation for this afternoon, had been rolled up, as were the fat German Fraus by their wholesomely perspiring husbands—men of good will—on to the plateau where the sward was level. But we would have to keep on the flat, going for our teas every afternoon in a little motorboat down the little Lahn to a little village called Wehrda, where there was a little, sad, stale café set down in a stony garden of gravel, with trees bare of their leaves and a few tables with check table-covers blowing about in the wind that was preparing the garden for winter. Germany at a disadvantage for once!

Gloomily we sat and consumed Sand Küchen, that seemed made of the gravel of the walk and ran out of the corners of our mouths, or chunks of cold plum tart called Pflaum Küchen, and observed the future compatriots of Joseph Leopold, striped and checked women, children and bundles—checks are a positive obsession in Germany—or watched the train on the opposite bank puffing away under the tunnel Cassel-wards, where we would go some day.

And on my birthday—the second with Joseph Leopold—came the news that *I* must dally no longer abroad, and that Joseph Leopold had better bestir himself and go to live in the lodgings that he had taken at Giessen, 29 Nordanlage, so as to be near his Rechts-anwalt, Herr Paul John—pronounced Powlyone. It looked, written, like our good old English John, but, lengthened so, it was rather sinister. . . .

Joseph Leopold saw me as far as Cologne, and I went the rest

of the way alone, without the Ulmer dog and violently depressed. However, in the society of my own mother and the mother of Joseph Leopold, and Mary Martindale, and my faithful maid and Byles, I forgot the great Dane. There was the nice, ugly bulldog which had worried eight sheep, a snub-nosed darling which, after its translation from the glooms of the stable at Aldington, bit no one but me.

But again I was depressed. Beauty, who still wrote to Joseph Leopold, never wrote to me. I forced her little hand. I asked her to stay. The simple answer came:

"Mother doesn't want me to come."

Her letter was to me of an indescribable pathos, for I knew Beauty loved me.

I only wish you had a little house in the country, and then I could. . . . I know that I am deserting you at the only time you will ever want me *again*. Dear Aunt V., I love you, but I love father too, so you must try not to be too cross with me. If you must be . . . I don't care what you do if you stop loving me. Perhaps I deserve it, but I don't think I do. . . .

No, of course she didn't, the darling! She was just an unsophisticated country girl—not a butterfly, as I would perhaps have had her be, but a dear little dormouse that her family was putting into the teapot, or, say, a bird tangled in the nets of Victorian conventions, unable to understand, bewildered in the wind of the flail of her mother's lawsuit.

For, weak and tottery from illness, I was hoisted into a position I deprecated earnestly, that of Receiver of my mother's estate. It was done, and I walked out alone through the iron doors, knowing perfectly well what a welter I was going into. There were envious eyes, a hundred rods in pickle for me, weapons concealed in the boskage of Campden Hill, sharp, bright, ready to be used if I made any sort of fool of myself. Errors of judgment would be visited p.d.q. by the usual punishment meted out to unjust or even foolish stewards. The sparrow, hopping off the pavement to go home, was in dread now of the great hoofs. . . .

First Year of Exile—Marooned in Germany—Complaints—Unwise dash to England—Operation—D. H. Lawrence's sympathy—Dawn of a Year of Litigation—Prayers at the Tomb of Charlemagne—Paris and the "Rice-pale Queen"—Arnold Bennett, the Tango and the Leg of Mutton—The Children complex—We Part—Beardsley's Hotel in Brussels—The Editor to Giessen—Business—"Dining himself in"—Judges and Arbiters of Fate—Giessen Worthies—The German Police—Diplomacies—Kowtowing—Smarter Rooms—Furnished or Unfurnished?—The Fatal Decision.

AND over there in Germany was Joseph Leopold getting domicile for his naturalisation, hating it, pleading, moaning, his "languid, plangent tenor" inaudible to me by any wave transference, but working his feeling off in letters as only a poet can. He is hopeful and hopeless by turns. He is annoyed at the slowness of the Rechts-anwalt; he is dying just to run across to me and see how I am, which would of course be suicidal to his hopes. "John says, 'Wait, it will all be well.'" The typist he employs to copy out his awful pothooks and hangers, consequent on an attack of writer's cramp, twigs her employer's restlessness, so un-German, and says, "What do you want to go to London for? *Kiessen iss gut enoff!*" In the languid, plangent tenor, he informs her: "But it isn't, it isn't!" He is *triste, triste en vérité*, bored stiff, as we say now, going in the intervals of his desk for dull walks with the dull Johns, calling on dull professors in the college, going over now and then for gold to Jena to lecture dully on the Pre-Raphaelites, his forebears, to Dr. Schücking's eager pupils, "talking himself in" slowly with genius, and its far-flung reputation, penetrating into this *Fester Burg* of Germany of which he desires to be a citizen. And, these trifling escapades apart, he is "pegging away at Mr. Sorrel in the deep silence that has fallen on me." He is not unhappy, only numb.

I had pressed for a description of 29 Nordanlage, and I got it. He had two rooms, the one giving on to the other. "In one is a

table, a writing-desk, a sofa, five chairs, and about two hundred and fifty ornaments, ranging from bits of coral like human brains, to gilded busts of Lohengrin. In the other room is a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, cupboard, washstand, and two hundred and fifty more ornaments." He was on the ground floor; the entrance was very dark, but the rooms were light and airy; the house smelt always of onions; the landlady appeared to be a deaf mute, and had bad teeth. "The sanitary arrangements are those that so horrify you, but are at a good distance."

Opposite the window was a little strip of green, covered now with orange-coloured leaves from the chestnut-tree. It was the fifth of October. "Many children play there all day, exploding percussion caps; from time to time they climb on to the railings, grin in at me as I sit writing, and exclaim, '*Tag! Engländer!*' Rooms and breakfast cost forty m. a month; lunch fifty pfg. (six-pence a day)."

I gathered he got up at eight-thirty, breakfasted at nine, and then walked along a strip of green, round the park, round the town to John's office to ask for letters, returning by ten-thirty and settling down to write, in dirt and discomfort; "the landlady informs me regularly that she did not expect me so soon and has not had time to sweep the room. At one she brings me a plate of soup, a plate of the beef the soup has been made from, and three pickled gherkins."

Mrs. Braun was no cook. When there was fish it was so bad that, not to hurt her pride, the author would put it in a drawer and forget it. His mother found these proofs of good-feeling among his shirts when she came to stay there. And after this lunch of sorts: "I walk the streets till three-thirty, slumber till four-thirty, write till six, go to dinner in the town (Hotel Gross Herzog, souper 1.50), come home at nine, write till ten, play patience till eleven, and go to bed."

I never got a letter that was not shot with the agony of writer's cramp, which every doctor he had ever consulted told him was just a nervous symptom, aggravated by loneliness. "The pain is fairly intermittent. When I write legibly the pain is bad; when I don't take trouble, and write illegibly, nothing to speak of. I shall get

along. I have been writing all the morning at this. One o'clock—Lo!—Mrs. Braun with soup . . . one-ten—soup eaten! . . . It is dreary, still weather with leaves falling everywhere. Mrs. Braun has brought some meat that looks like worsted. . . . Yes, I smoke cigars at 5 pfg. (a halfpenny)."

The army, later, cured the 'cramp. But here was a dreary state of things, and it should be ended as soon as possible. I had never seen John, and rather hoped I never should. But I was British enough to want a British opinion. I wrote off on my own account to Sir John Westlake, the eminent international lawyer and another of my father's old friends—how good they were to me, and how I tried them! Old John Westlake, as his Cornish tenants called him and his pony impartially, who adored Papa and Sir Charles Dilke, and would never believe any harm of the latter. He answered that he had lots of time in Cornwall, and would tell me anything I liked. I put the case to him. His answer, though hard and contradictory of certain ready and fallacious assumptions of mine, was kindly and reassured me completely as to the main point, telling me plainly what rested with *me* to do.

I made up my mind to carry out faithfully his prescriptions as far as I could. They involved a good deal of grandmotherly legislation, and would irritate Joseph Leopold. He was so fundamentally careless of everything that did not concern literature. It was certain that he must not come to England to see me through. I wrote and told him that it was going to be a very minor operation and that he must on no account worry about it.

One afternoon Mary Martindale took me to a certain house in Minden Terrace—strange how Germany followed me even there!—and put me in the hands of a matron who, having read my books and conceiving of me, therefore, as *une femme forte*, was sensible enough to enter into a bargain with me. I was to be allowed one visitor every day, and only one, who could stay from three till six—two hours longer than the usual time. I on my side contracting to eat well and never have a temperature. I kept my word, and she kept hers. As far as getting up a temperature went I had no inclination to do so, although there was a constant coming and going in my room of jolly Irish nurses, coming one by

one to see my French nightgowns, and although I was given pork for dinner the day after I had been "cut."

The stipulation as to the daily visitor arose from the fact that Fräulein Reiss, of "*Kiessen, gut enoff!*" could not succeed in keeping her employer's nose to his desk. He got the surreptitious telegram that his sister-in-law sent him about me the day before at ten o'clock, and, starting at midnight, was in London half an hour after the portals of the home had closed upon me. That evening, lonely, disconsolate, full of castor oil and little else, I sat on my bed like a frightened performer before the play, when I was suddenly summoned to the 'phone downstairs, and, lifting the receiver, listened again to a voice not heard since two months ago on Cologne platform. I sent for the matron and made the bargain.

Next morning at seven they dressed me in what seemed to be a diver's suit, a shirt and leggings of wool up to my waist, and sent me down breakfastless to the waiting-room, furnished with a chair and a telephone, while my bedroom was being "done." I dared not use the telephone, though Joseph Leopold was at my mother's house, because he was there incognito. I waited there alone from seven till nine, when I was fetched back to my own room, all altered and white. There was no bed that I could see, but a linen-covered trestle—it looked like an ironing board—on which I was told to stretch myself. In passing I had noticed a table on which there lay a splendid array of knives. And then gas! Waking on my bed all right I saw a nurse sitting with her back to me at the fire making herself an apron—and a cup of tea—and my maid came with my letters—and Joseph Leopold was to come at three! It was just eleven then. I was told not to wriggle much. Why should I? I felt no pain.

I was not alone more than one day, the day Joseph Leopold sneaked down to see his children in their convent for what, though he did not know it, was going to be the last time before he went out to fight in 1915. He was taking them the necklaces of amber I had threaded for them out of my big haul of twelve—not necklaces but neck-collars—that I had bought in a Marburg pawnshop, the deposit, I suppose, of needy Prussian peasant women gone poor under the Prussian régime.

I had some very nice letters, several from the friend of Joseph Leopold, D. H. Lawrence, who wrote and said he was so sorry I should be "being played all out of tune like a badly handled violin." He wanted money to get married, and he sent me—actually in this connection—the MS. of two plays. Presently there came a third, "rather more raggy," which he had refrained at first from sending—"afraid it was too rowdy to send to a lady muffled up in a nursing-home!" It was *Mrs. Holroyd*.

Not at all. I wasn't ill. I was quite happy. Though my bed wasn't exactly a bed of roses, it was soft enough. This was the only "lie down" that I had ever submitted to. Taken all in all, those ten days were the happiest of my life. I corrected my own new book, covered my bed with MS. and papers, boxes and rolls, till the nurses squeaked with amusement every time they came in, and I read carefully what I had taken down when I was too ill to know what I was doing, namely *Ancient Lights*, just out, with a dedication, "To my Kids."

Shock number two out of that book!

Beauty did not write, but her mother did. A letter of sympathy—stark, severe sympathy, but still sympathy.

In truth, as regards my sister, our love, which at one time amounted to a passion, died hard and subsisted for very long—languishing, moribund almost, but still there. I was aware of it in her letters to me; cropping up every now and again, these showed tendernesses, allusions to our common past, sandwiched in between crude sternnesses that were embodied in parrot-like phrases showing the poor little mind diseased, infected with a virus, corroded with suggestions altogether foreign to her gentle, upright, unsubtle nature.

This queer *entente* between her and the woman she was "laming into" survived through recriminations, arraignings, and accusations and at the last, when the pencil strokes grew weak and spidery as if deprecating their significance—of peculation, fraud, and forgery even—through endless pages to where the inept production trailed off into the signature. For she was no artist, not even an unconscious one, merely a pretty, uncommonly silly, vain, and temperamental woman, as good as gold but her mind lying

prone and plastic under the drillings of intelligences superior to her own. They worried her. She did not find them soothing.

Our Aunt Jane was about on her mental level, and Goneril always sent her a goose at Christmas with garnishings of knitted woollies and so on. She slept a good deal, and preferred sitting to standing, and lying down to either. These days she generally lay on a sofa and made herself blouses beautifully. The last communication that she made me after we had ever so slightly come together, just before her death, was a picture-postcard bearing on one side the usual Christmas congratulations, and on the other a tank, ploughing along with its back up!

Joseph Leopold returned to Germany the day I left the nursing-home.

And then there followed the hideous proposition to go away for a change. That "change," always so sane, so cold, so dull, and in the depths of winter, too! Eastbourne—the very name is chilly—or at best Bournemouth, or perhaps Ventnor. And alone. My mother's journeyings were done. I yearned for a place where Joseph Leopold could come and stay, meeting me half way, from Germany. . . . Abroad? That would be expensive, or seem expensive. Commend me to English spas for dearness!

The Belgian one! Just across the frontier from Germany! I wrote to my godfather and enlisted his sympathies. He knew Aunt Jane. He had lately written to my mother and told her not to let me be "ploted"—alluding to the plucking process which prepares geese, and ducks too, for the table. He sent me fifty quid and his blessing if I would go from Spa to a place in the Ardennes called Laroche and buy him a ham of a pig fed on juniper—one of the specialities of this place. He enclosed an old label off a parcel which had once enwrapped such a dainty.

But I had a good deal to do before I could leave England. I had to get the editor out of No. 84; furniture and books to sort; an angry bank manager—whom Joseph Leopold had forgotten to warn that he was opening an account at another bank—to pacify; and my own affairs to attend to, that is to say, some harassing appearances before the Master in Lunacy, who, perhaps because he could not see, always seemed to my jaundiced eyes to insist on

taking the wrong view. His nice wife happened to be a friend of the family's, but do you think he took any notice of that? Cæsar too was above suspicion. What so disagreeably affected me was the fact that he only heard voices and never saw faces, so that he never knew when a speech was left unfinished or whether one looked a decent, credible sort of person or no. That made it very difficult to behave, and no doubt he thought one wasn't behaving!

About a week before Christmas I got off to Spa, where an old colleague of the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *World*, lived. Thérèse Descours was married to the principal doctor of the sad Queen of the wicked Leopold in her retreat at Laeken. And Joseph Leopold from Giessen, where he kept his rooms, was there to meet me; he lodged at Alighans's, next door to the Guilleaumes.

And then there began a funny little life in this funny little, very old-fashioned *ville d'eau*, that does not even boast a Consul, whose inhabitants are so good that they have abolished the tables and live on the waters. There is one spring outside the Pouhon, where all the Spadois come with jugs to draw their drinking-water. In the mornings Joseph Leopold tried to teach me German, to improve my literary style, and wrote prefaces to my book, which Mr. Pawling unfailingly turned down, with the polite excuse that good wine needed no bush. Or Joseph Leopold played golf at Balmoral, the club high up in the snowy hills overhanging Spa, and I went up there to tea and ate *cramique*, the cake of the country. Now and then we made little journeys to Liège, where a surprisingly clever doctor lived. Or we took the train to Germany, where Joseph Leopold was supposed to be living. That is one of the ways he always managed to queer his own pitch.

On New Year's Eve the snow hung on the trees in a solid wall of white over the red roofs of Spa, and we all went over to supper at Alighans's, and Joseph Leopold made his famous punch. And when day dawned on what was to prove a year of bitter, continuous litigation, he fetched me early, and we took the train. At eleven o'clock on New Year's Day, 1911, he and I, kneeling painfully on the stones of the Cathedral at Aix la Chapelle, over the tomb of Charlemagne, in the company of other godly Germans, in the

coloured darkness of the great rose window, smelling the bitter-sweet of the incense, heard Mass.

I was rapt . . . but Joseph Leopold, kneeling at my side—misliking his attitude, the cold stones, or suddenly appalled perhaps, by all this ceremonial: envisaging the enormity of the task he had set himself—was in a sense unsympathetic to me. A cold, patient man, without fire, lazy of habit: his heart, dull-beating, was perhaps more faint about it all than he was willing to let it appear. It wasn't really his job, and he was up against clever, shrewd people who had spent all their lives at it and had not novels to write, but gained their living in a less nervous way. And I sometimes think that in disgust at the obvious disparity he took a sort of pride in sticking to—in putting all his wits into his own profession, and making the other his hobby. Just playing at law was a relaxation from the stern professional necessity of finding—let us call it—*les mots justes*, and plenty of them. The wild-cat schemes, absurd solutions of the insoluble, incredible lapses, quick changes, like the permutations of a shilling shocker, that this artist liked to put up! He was determined to get—he could not help getting—the fierce ancestral colours—always into his plots, schemes, and books. For he was the grandson of the painter of "Parisina," who, as a boy, lived in Brussels and near the Wiertz Museum, absorbing its horrors till he came to see all life, even still life, like matter in a rage. I notice in the grandson's work—always the passions of his puppets are set forth with a reasonable, yet cloudy violence. His villains are as lazy in vice as his saints are active in piety—never "quite or'nery folk like you and me." But Joseph Leopold condescended not to go into the mental processes of either you or of me. His habitual disregard of the mentality of others played their game.

Here is a letter from him to me: a bomb, the proposed casual treatment of great issues. "I should rather like to suggest having one of the children over here for their holidays—but I don't quite see how to fit it in." I should think not, indeed! I wonder if he remembered the answer of a Prime Minister—a post which I pretty well occupied to him—to a potentate who proposed a little rectification of frontiers: "Only three kingdoms, sire."



GONERIL IN BED

A veil of pride and mental libertinage seemed to come over his eyes and made him—so knowledgeable—as blind as those that can't see. And simple! Anybody could "do" this sapient creature, whose vision strayed far beyond them and missed them. It reminded me of the "kidding" of the short-sighted Mr. Spooner that I used to observe in the streets of Oxford. The undergrads, out of bounds or peccant in some way, used to run the gauntlet fearlessly, nip past him as near as possible under his nose, and so escape "gating."

He told me with modest pride the story of the deer in the pen in the yard of the Grosser Herzog in Giessen, where he had stayed when he was looking for lodgings. The deer was being fattened for the table. It was in a twisted cage of boughs in the hotel grounds, where the children, passing, prodded it and poked it with sticks, and threw mock food to the wild and vulnerable creature that had nothing to do but lie down in its misery and hope to be killed and eaten soon.

Joseph Leopold bought him alive for two pounds ten, hired a cart, took him to the Hunnen Grabe beyond the town, and let him bound away to the forest. But, when I came to Giessen, I went to see the place of this humane exploit, and a deer undergoing the same treatment was in the pen. . . .

Certainly, through this year at least, I lived like that deer, vulnerable, prodded at, shot at. . . . The law of England, supported by orders, summonses, and petitions, lay heavy on us both. I wonder how many times we resorted to the Consul at Frankfort to sign this or that—he or I? Fate was very hard on him—first the Review, then the children. After that January of 1911 I do not think he ever smiled much again.

He had lost one of the things he had loved best in the whole of his life, his paper, and he was going to lose the children. He would continue to fork out something like two hundred a year for them, but no longer would he have the right to suggest its expenditure, dictate their little policies, sympathise with their little sorrows, make good certain nursery losses of credit, and so forth. His Aunt Emma's oft-repeated doctrine that the only way to keep his memory green in their minds was to "give them things" found an

echo in his own, but when he was depressed he would admit that "it was a purely unreasonable desire to keep one's memory green, and not worth doing." But he jolly well tried to do it.

His duties seemed to have resolved themselves into that of paying.¹ His payments were made with the greatest regularity, involving in many cases a considerable amount of mental stress. For suddenly to get a bill with a long list of items addressed to you by a polite Mother Superior, who is more than your social equal, who appreciates you for what you are—a genius—and sends you her best Christmas wishes, but who wants to be settled with like any other creditor, only more so, coming into the middle of a jaunt to Braunfels or Wetzlar, which you open as you sit in a *Biergarten* with your glass of *Grosses Dunkles* on the table beside you, having walked miles through a trackless German forest, is sufficiently discrepant and upsetting. But—chalk it up to him!—it was paid always on the nail, big accounts and little accounts, holiday funds, doctors' bills, clothes accounts, down to the smallest details of toothbrushes and hair-ribbons—cars, pony-traps . . . but that came later, and was the very devil!

His only consolation, and I rubbed it in as often as I could—if people would only rub in consolations as they rub in disagreeables!—that the children were being brought up in his own special religion, as expressly stipulated, was certainly present. He had been received into the Church himself when he was in Paris, a boy of eighteen. I think the charms of the Father who prepared him, and the picturesqueness of it all, were what appealed to the poet. He had the greatest dislike to the ugliness of Anglicanism—the inartistic compounding with the anomalies of the confused service, three in one, held in a building whence The Rood has been taken down by the immediate ancestors of those who are sitting there, in deadly opposition to their still earlier ancestors, those of the Old Faith, who have been butchered and gibbeted for it. The compromise of high churchiness, of which he had naturally seen a great deal, was his horror.

I was jealous of the children, for I was so often sacrificed to them. He thought it was the other way:

¹ See Appendices.

"Chalk that up to me if I have been a bear lately."

He wrote on a literary matter to D. H. Lawrence in what "D. H." called his new "Jove-abdicated-in-disgust tone," and afterwards commented on to me:

"He is really such a lot better fellow than he thinks he ought to be, to belong to this shabby state of things, but he daubs his dove-grey kindness with a villainous selfish tar, and hops forth a very rook among rooks, but his eyes, after all, remain like the Shulamite's, dove's eyes."

I shall always love D. H. Lawrence for that, though I never see him, and I think the worthiest action of Joseph Leopold's life was recognition of his genius, and Lawrence's practical help of prompt publication which the editor of a review could give. He printed him in chunks, and "D. H." was charmingly grateful for *la moindre des choses*.

I made up my mind to go and beat up the Paris relations for myself. Emile Guilleaume, as well as being a doctor, could tell fortunes by the cards. The cards were against me; still, we decided to go to Agnes Farley's in Paris for the week-end. Joseph Leopold wrote to his cousin and announced our arrival. Perhaps the letter was not tactful, for I saw one specimen of the correspondence when I got back. It ran:

"Be more correct in your expressions."

I went to see the rich banker in the Rue de Coq. He approved of *me*. But he was an ardent religionist, and built Catholic churches, and had married his daughter to the Duc de Tancarville, and wrote from the beautiful castle of that name on the Seine.

And while I was there my own poor heart was pierced. The Beauty went and married herself without telling me. It was not her fault. She did not mean to be unkind. She was "sweetly" religious, and had been forbidden by her earthly father to write to me. Well, well! With tears in my eyes, so queerly unsuitable in Paris, where I think I have never in my life, anywhere, in any place, seen a French woman in such a state, I went and bought her a *porte bonheur* at Loucher's. It was civilly acknowledged one statutory week after the honeymoon. Brides are not supposed to

attend to their purely social obligations until that period of grace has supervened.

Rose Le Quesne, the artist, took us to the Bal Bullier, where we watched the new dances, the Tango and the Fox Trot and the Bunny Hug. And we went to the Moulin de la Galette where, years ago, when I was living in Paris, Arnold Bennett and I used to sit by the hour at a little china table on iron legs, *à l'écart* of the dancers, sipping our *rhum St. James*, watching the hatless *midinettes* of the morning hours taking their soulful pleasure of the night. It was beautiful. Passionate, pale-faced, weary, dead-eyed, they hung like creepers, only their feet moving, on the shoulders of their partners, their *michés* of one evening perhaps! We would single out, Arnold Bennett and I, as they came round and round again past our table, the dancers who looked most utterly "gone." He serious, determined, a temporary rock of fidelity; she *pamée*, in her plain black dress and black hat of daily use, but delicately, sensibly shod always. Distinguished, all of them!

Joseph Leopold went by himself to Les Ambassadeurs in the open air—and came home and wrote "All the Dead," about a vision he had had on the Hunnen Grabe, the Champs Elysées of Giessen, . . . the Germanic warriors rising, clasping to their iron breastplates the German maidens that have lain buried with them for the last thousands and thousands of years. That is the funny way poems come!

We lunched with Arnold Bennett and his new wife in the Rue de Grenelle, and, cynically, as a great luxury, they treated us to an English leg of mutton and potatoes and greens.

And back to Emile Guillaume's "I told you so!" The night after, in a car rolling along moonlit roads to Verviers Junction, where we parted, Joseph Leopold back to 29 Nordanlage, whose horrors, from his conversation, I already began dimly to envisage, and I to Calais—for England.

It was the night mail I took; I was too ill for the four-hour Ostend passage, which the Belgians obstinately, by fair means or foul, tried to make one use. As we reached Brussels a look at my watch convinced me that I should not be allowed to "make the

connection." I confided my anxiety to the carriageful of Belgians, who admitted it was hopeless, and that I should have to sleep in Brussels. A gentleman sitting opposite me, who had been profuse in civilities since Verviers, kept saying: "Let me . . . you must come to The Midi . . . it is the best . . ." I put him off politely; the ladies in the carriage seemed to think I should have considered myself lucky. . . . I hoped a *chasseur* from some one of the big hotels at Brussels would be meeting the train. But it was eleven o'clock, the lights were dim, and, as far as I could see, there was not a soul on the platform. The wretched man got out too, and would not leave me; he was insistent. Without answering him, my eyes played round the station until I detected a cap with some gold galon, and I rushed at it. Gold Galon said Hotel de Saxe—the very hotel that Aubrey Beardsley used to stay at and draw! I went with the *chasseur*, and the gentleman went in the other direction, saying indignantly over his shoulder, "I leave you to your fate." He meant the relative status of the hotel, which he imagined would appal me. It was not an hotel; it was a *buvette*—with bedrooms, or, perhaps, one bedroom. The room into which I was ushered, with its leering volutes and hideous bellyings of brown mahogany, intimately reminded me of Aubrey's drawing. Some yellow-white leno curtains hid from me the lights of Brussels. A candlestick was handed to me—the electric light had failed. I had half a roll stuffed with ham in my bag. I ate it, and then got into bed without a nightgown. The sheets were very cool and clean, but presently . . . a noise . . . a rustling. . . . I was just going to rush out into the passage when I remembered that I had no dressing-gown. While I was putting on a few clothes a whitish cat came in through the leno curtains and purred and made friends with me. I found a spot of whiskey in my flask, and slept like a log with the cat on the bed. It was like being at home. In the morning I wondered if my pound would run to a breakfast as well as my night's lodging? When I paid, however, with the tip for the *chasseur* who was going to take me to the station, there seemed enough for a *petit déjeuner*, with twopence over. Downstairs the woman of the house, who was washing the parquet, gave me something to eat—going on with her washing and moving my chair

round and round so that it should not impede her ministrations. . . .

I contrived to send Joseph Leopold a line from Brussels to tell him what had happened. He acknowledged it, and did not even enquire what sort of a night I had had.

At home it was what I had learned to call very *ungeheuer*—rather like a Grimm fairy-tale. My mother was stowed away in her own “apartments”; the servants were in the basement. I used to meet on the stairs one or other of my sisters coming to visit my mother, passing them in silence. Some iron did enter into my soul. But it was very like an Ibsen or a Chekov play.

The only thing certain is—uncertainty. At least, I’m sure it may be so in Germany. The letters I got ran on permutations of mood. When the wheel was on the upturn it was a Pæan; a Jeremiad it was after I had left him. Delays! Of course—what did he expect? And lawyers “fencing voluptuously with commas” in England and Germany both! Long inconclusive interviews with the authorities, “who keep on raising obstacles for the mere pleasure of doing so.”

The number of excuses being put up “are simply immeasurable; why, it takes three months here to dispose of a pickpocket who, in your country, would be done with in a day.” He was already a German subject, anyhow; he had yet to become a citizen of the town of Giessen. Now they want proofs of his connection with this rich and honourable family whose name he bears. . . . “Will you send an old writing-case, reddish, Russian leather . . . with silver clasps? from Holland Park Avenue?” And all mixed up with allusions to the other preoccupation—Love! “It’s tragic, it’s absurd, it’s ridiculous, but there it is!” . . . The Jamesian cadences smote my ear. I was astonished that the so faithful disciple did not insert “wonderfully” before the last word! Allusions to “stomachic uproar owing to Mrs. Braun’s cooking,” requests for “pants and vests” that were not forthcoming . . . collar measurements. . . . Browningsque—I did not mind.

He was simply ineffably bored, and dying to be in London. My account of Gwen Otter’s dinner of all *les névroses*, and of Frank Harris, my neighbour, sending away all Gwen’s beautiful viands

and preferring to munch dry biscuits out of a paper bag, which he crumbled all over the cloth and offered to me and H. G., who sat on my other hand, in his interesting fingers, seemed to make Joseph Leopold long to be there.

Why was I so calm, so pleased to be away from him? I answered that if my mother died I would go to him at once, and leave what he derisively called my home. I had no "equanimity," only a grim determination to second his efforts to acquire *pax Germanica*. I knew that complainings from me would bring him back in a moment, ruin him and the hope of that *pax*, and that hard work and sticking to it would mean money, and that, even for the things of the spirit, one must have money? And so my counsels to be civil to publishers, and not sit starving on a high horse while the foot-people picked up pennies.

He reassured me. Gloom had not quite stopped his productiveness. He was "shoving L.W.B.E. along good and strong, and working double tides at the 'Rems.'" But he could hardly keep his eyes open, and there were leaden weights on all his limbs. It was bitterly cold—eight degrees of frost all day—and snow falling all the time. His future countrymen called it normal, and liked it. The atrocious prospect, the hideous rooms and uneatable cookery, the silence, and the rest of it—"things that seem funny when they are only temporary, but become portentous when they put on an aspect of permanence." Giessen was worse than Brixton, where at least I could go and see him once a week. But he would be strong; Giessen might kill him, but he would not give in. He would, with my leave, weigh on me with all the weight with which Giessen bore on him, and I must bear it. The change became so marked that even Mr. Lawrence inveighed against what he found in Joseph Leopold's letters—"the grin-and-bear-it, ironic attitude, which is just so much grin foisted off on folk, and no one thanks you!" and advised him, when afflicted, to "howl shamelessly to the ever-attentive heavens." And he did! I was more attentive than the firmament, I fancy.

He had to sit tight, for any day the Ministry might summon him.

There were, I made out, three parties to the matter. The Town

Council, who did not like him, the State Ministry, that wanted him, the judicial side—*Landsgericht Amt*—neutral. The Ministerium ordered the Municipality to accept him, and the Municipality were engaged in offering objections. By Saturday, perhaps, when the matter came up for final revision—it was always final for the moment—they might accept him—and they might not! The Town Council had been “soundly wigged by the State in the matter, and had now got their backs up. . . .”

And every now and again he admitted that he had been extravagant and given Mrs. Braun and her revolutionary, revolting cookery a “miss,” and had gone out and dined well at Hettler’s or the Bahnhof. So, as the result of a decent meal, the liver was better, the mercurial disposition asserted itself. “The excellent John says there is every chance of the authorities recognising me soon . . . and if they don’t I shall appeal to the Emperor. . . .” “John says the authorities have already favourably reported me to the Grand Duke—the man we met in Nauheim. He’s at Darmstadt, where he plays the democratic potentate who walks about and drinks beer with his subjects. I may have to go to Darmstadt. . . .”

He worked like a nigger at calling on these people who liked him; “They would *fêter* me if I allowed it.” There is the terrible doctor of philology who drives him mad with Grimm’s Law and mediæval roots; there is old Salzmann, “who fastens on me like a leech,” there are students’ parties at a Professor’s which will kill him. And dinners with the Rechtsanwalt and his wife, “amiable, but too busy to be any good socially—tired, nervous, over-worked people both.”

This nervousness he considered to be a decided feature of German mentality at that time when all Germany was not so much planning a French invasion as dreading a “try on” for the recovery of the lost provinces, that fetish which, as my mother said, “stood between the French and their wits.” A sense of imminence, procuring the usual nerves and dyspepsia. These people were martyrs to it. John was, witness his red, bumped-out cheeks, his shiny, tight forehead, his breathlessness, his little punctuating groans. It is the national curse. And they work off some of its minor imme-

diate effects every year with regularity, spending a month in some Kur or other as a matter of course, for business, not pleasure.

They do not, as we English do for fun, disobey the orders of their Geheimrath. Fun! There is no fun in Germany, only *Simplicissimus*, the *Punch* of this nation, quite unintroduceable—so different from our advertised little gentleman—into the drawing-room, or even the home. It lies on the tables at Markese's in Marburg and such little restaurants, where the men go to drink tea and coffee in glasses after dinner. The Kaiser in its pages permits himself to be foully abused and made a cockshy of under the crust of coarseness. He is wise—or was wise. It acted, I suppose, as a *détente* for his loving and patient people.

As for the Judge in his forthcoming cause, Joseph Leopold had him well in hand; gave him an English lesson once a week, rubbing in the idea during the rests that he sincerely desired to be an inhabitant of his horrid town—which he did not, exactly—and perhaps that was why the gentleman seemed, as Joseph Leopold admitted, slightly sceptical of his desire. Such a thing the formal German official had never heard of in a Briton before, the reverse being so steadily the rule. So he is not much flattered at the earnestness of Joseph Leopold to become his fellow-townsmen, for he thinks there must be a catch in it! Giessen is "*gut enoff*," but hardly pleasant. And Joseph Leopold, unable to present it with a new pump or a new town hall or a new barracks, is conscious that it is up to him to persuade them that he is just a quiet, unthinking *bon vivant*, frequenting the officers' mess, fairly prosperous (as they have an eye to taxes), throwing money—not too madly—about, and, installing one of the actresses as his *maîtresse en titre*, managing to appear "politically undangerous."

That was the rub. Socialism! Germany's bugbear and menace, the staff of Junkerdom! He knew that if they were to discover in him the slightest trace of that virus all was up. But they would not, of course. The Police knew all there was to know, and they could not be taken in. The Police was the reason why I was told so little, it was their spying that, said Joseph Leopold, so "limited his powers of expression," for he was a shy man. Apart from

sentiment, I kept asking him for sensible letters, *sensible* three times underlined. I found out when he came to England in May, and not till then, the nature of one of the obstacles he spoke of. They wanted an undertaking from him that, when he was adopted as a citizen, he would live actually in the town of Giessen.

Jamais de la vie! He had thought and talked of a villa on the Rhine, near Aunt Emma—a villa that could be let for the summer, and where money, that Germans adore, would be his for the asking and a little deference and kowtowing to an ancient and influential relative. Once admitted to civic privileges, he would keep his promise to Aunt Emma and take up the family title, now in abeyance, and recover the large entailed estates in Prussia that were his by inheritance. . . .

A good fence for the German relations, but really peace. Peace! I wanted it. I wanted, the moment my mother died, to get out of the country that held the Beauty, turned unkind, Goneril and Regan, not to speak of others uncongenial and disagreeable to me. Marwood wanted him to get a foreign correspondentship in Paris. He knew four languages. And, if it could not be Paris, a house at Aix-la-Chapelle, or at Montjoie, that fantastic little *opera-bouffe* village just across the border, or Malmédy whence he could run over and see the Guilleaumes. All the smart Spadois had villas in Germany. All the Germans who did business in Belgium—and there are hundreds of them—had town houses in Verviers or Pepinster or on the wooded heights of Spa; little red-brick villas that you can see for miles, like Wendy's house in the woods.

We had both taken London *en grippe*, but in my heart of hearts I knew it *would* be London in the end—at any rate, London for six months of the year. Joseph Leopold had the social instinct so thoroughly developed. He was no “sticker”—alas!

And then the question of *impressing* assumed enormous proportions, and he was getting ill, dying, down there in the marsh where the storks flew about and nested on unsanitary roofs. He *must* get up on the hill where the University buildings are. It looked so bad for the Judge to call on him and find him living in a pigstye, with a passage smelling of drains, and having to go through the bedroom to get to the sitting-room. Here was he, trying to impress this man

with his eminence, and the man replies, "Why, then, is he living in a room that a poor student wouldn't think of?" What Joseph Leopold wanted was a place where he could exhibit some possessions of his own, not the landlady's, and have a table on which to put a dinner, ordered in—plates and spoons and all—from an hotel, "the way every bachelor in Giessen lives who is above the rank of a student."

"Just consider what an odd figure a German similarly situated would make in England, where they gossip as they do here! All John can say in my defence is that I am eccentric, and I daresay that is true enough, but it won't do. The police here enquire into every stick of furniture in the house, and all is registered in the central office for the authorities to consult when they want to."

He would add:

"And *you*—you are one of those wonderful people, so Mrs. Prothero says, that can actually *see* what you don't *want* to see! Can't you see this? Or is it one of your crises of irresistible instinct that it would be cruel of me to override?"

No, only I "knew my Pappenheimer."

The flat, he said, must be Unfurnished. He could have furniture for £100, the seller taking it back at the end of the year for £80. He had seen a flat—the police had found out he wanted one—damned impertinent German police!—for £20. He was already paying Mrs. Braun £26 a year, a shilling a day for coal and light. . . .

What I was afraid of was, precisely, Unfurnished rooms. I up and begged him in a letter to take a Furnished flat, even scantily furnished, and we could supplement it. No! He might as well give up what John wanted him to do at once. He had spent a precious week in making enquiries. . . . "What am I to do? *What?*" Why had I taken the responsibility of keeping him alive? Having done so, I must now persevere and repair my crossing of the terrible finality of his arrangements a year ago. He supposed I wanted to break his spirit? Oh, yes, I was breaking his spirit all right by my crushing and convincing *exposé* of ways and means; the only argument that a person of his philosophy could oppose was this, that while one is gathering the ways and garnering the means

one is spending the good years, and he'd leave it till he heard from me again.

I am afraid I paltered with the issue—it was perhaps far more serious than I thought. This prying of the German police that he was dinning into me was perhaps to blame. And perhaps I shall be arraigned before the Bar of the Heavenly Academy of Letters for thus preaching down with a horde of little maxims the heart of one of its most hopeful members.

I could not hear the languid, plangent tenor over the water, but I am sure that its tones would have frayed my heart's strings to tatters.

"Do, for heaven's sake, wire what you *honestly want*. This sort of thing is getting too distracting. I *must* arrange by Monday week. . . ."

I sent a long, costly telegram to the effect that he must take a flat—furnished or unfurnished, as he thought proper. And why did he defer to my opinion so? How could I *honestly want* anything? I knew nothing but what he told me; I could not judge.

I *honestly* just want you to do what you can that will get the German citizenship. I certainly thought at first that that would come automatically after five months' domicile—is that the right word? You see how uninstructed I am and how easily I can muddle you and myself. Take no more notice of anything I write of a carping or enquiring nature. This is really final, for, when I don't know what I am talking about, I am no good. Brush my opinion aside; you are the man on the spot. What did the woman say last year at Fleckhardt's Höhe? Don't be *unter den Pantoffel!* Nobody wants you to be.

And this astonishing man wrote next day:

Of course, since it upsets you, I must give up the idea of unfurnished rooms. You don't appreciate how important it is!

And the next letter:

Have practically settled to take furnished rooms again, kept by a waiter who was for three years at the Criterion, and under-

stands the better what one's needs are. So let your spirit be at rest. . . . It wasn't a frivolous device for spending money . . . but, of course, you will not be able to see that and will always be in panics over the idea of expenditure.

Expostulations! And the reply:

Of course you shall have your way about everything. [You always do, you know.

More expostulations! And:

Darling, I have taken furnished rooms, so that's over. You do bedevil me so.

This crux of Furnished *v.* Unfurnished was perhaps the turning point?

I do not know.

Second Year in Exile—More favourable attitude of the Authorities—Joseph Leopold as usual sanguine—My visit to Giessen—Joseph Leopold's mother as chaperon and housekeeper—No Storks—The Johns, first impressions—He and She and the Tertium Quid—Captain Walloth and The Harem Skirt—My Distrust—Joseph Leopold's Confidence—German veneration of Wilde and Galsworthy—I feed it—Giessen Society's Reception of me—Paying Calls in German—"Dumb Crambo" ditto—Visit of the Johns to England—Business and Pleasure—The Coronation and Mr. Lloyd George—The Germans and Mr. W. J. Locke—His Great Dane and my Bulldog—Mr. W. H. Hudson, Mr. Bernard Shaw and my Owl—Return of Joseph Leopold to Exile—Too Frivolous for the Germans—Neglecting the Main Object—The Children again—Good News at last—Too Casual Intimation—Insist on Formal Assurance—Get it—The Johns sinister—War Rumours—Threatened Railway Strike—To Paris all the same—Congratulatory Letters from Mrs. Ward and Conrad—Plans—A House—A Grave on the Schiffberg—Henry James on Mr. Guggenheim—Gare de l'Est and the Rainbow over Rheims.

By March he had moved and was getting in. He was sitting on the balcony in the sun. He was rushing his book through at a tremendous rate. The German papers were full of a book called *Ancient Lights*. Mimi had sent him the Coblentzer one, hailing him as the Prodigal Son who is about to re-enter the Fatherland. The funny thing was that the father was the prodigal, old Franz Hüf-fer, who shook off the dust of Germany, so odious to his artistic and enlightened mind, as long ago as the seventies.

And then we took a holiday in England and went down to Inchmery to stay with Lady De La Warr, where he played bridge all night till ten with my lady and her daughter and a nice Catholic priest. Poor Father Consett had always to get up and leave the game at ten sharp—some obscure rule common to the religion of three of the party. And then, after a good chunk of the season's joys, Joseph Leopold took his mother back to Giessen.

The authorities were, I understand, much impressed by his move. The handsome flat, his mother there to give it the semblance of a

general home, paying calls for him, trotting about with little Mrs. John; and, in about a month, I was invited over.

I had bought a harem skirt. Those dictators of fashion, the buyers, were attempting to *lancer* this charming and sensible garment. I for one wish they had succeeded. He wrote:

It will be good business if you bring the harem skirt; the whole town is agog about this new fashion, I find, and I will ask some local swells in to tea to see you in it. Bring Chandler. He'd be no use, but I'd love to show him the exquisite Bahnhof Restaurant here and what caterers can do.

Of course I didn't bring Chandler, though he would have enjoyed it.

Giessen is a junction, a very smart junction, decorated *art nouveau*, like the rest of Germany. The roof is frescoed with wild flowers, and electric lights, in the form of campanulas, are hung in elegant festoons on long, thin, metal cords like organ pipes. The sandwiches like dreams and the beer *like beer*—and that is saying a good deal!

Joseph Leopold's flat was on the first floor and newly built—scaffolding poles still about it. It looked very imposing, and no place for storks. His man, a waiter at the Bahnhof, and his wife, lived in. She cooked and Rabich valeted Joseph Leopold. Mutterchen and I; yes, she had given up her pleasant room in the flat in order to come and chaperon me in the Hotel Prinz Heinrich, slept there and had meals with her son. She took a stern view of her duties; I don't think that Easter I was alone with Joseph Leopold for more than ten minutes.

It was a perfect rush of gaiety. Everyone called: professors and their wives, doctors and their wives, the military especially, and the *Chef de Gare*, who was a captain as well—useful “touch” this, thus to put the Army at the head of the Transport! Captain Walloth, who came o' mornings and made his white *Schimmel* curvet for my delectation under the windows, was one of your strong, silent, fat men. I don't think I ever heard him say much more than “*Wie geht's Ihnen?*” and another phrase. . . . For, next day,

wearing my harem skirt, we went to the Johns; not a real call—calls are paid in the morning—but to tea in a friendly way. Captain Walloth was coming on purpose to see it—the Herr Rechtsanwalt was going to steal a few moments from his work. . . .

Skirts were already so tight this year that it seemed rather absurd to make such a fuss about a woman's putting each leg in a separate trouser, as it were, when she was ordinarily and every day putting both legs into one. Indeed, in my nice new dress, as I went up Frau John's easy, broad-stepped oak staircase, I walked with a sense of freedom very un-German-fraulike, and entered the drawing-room where I was to be the guest of honour—I and my *hosen rock*. . . .

There were large saddlebag chairs, and little tables bearing the novels of John Galsworthy and H. G. Wells, and on the wall, plates, and on the mantel, peacock's feathers in the style recommended by Wilde. These German people venerate his memory. When Dr. Schücking last year learned that I as nearly as possible escaped the honour of being Mrs. Wilde, he treated me with added respect.

Tea—stout tea—was spread in the dining-room. Everyone was thinking of my dress. The Herr Rechtsanwalt had come home earlier to see it. Captain Walloth sat beside me, murmuring in a soft, luscious, yet raucous whisper, "*Hosen rock!*" Frau John said she should not have known it was bifurcated if she had not been told. Herr John was silent . . . he already saw the police on my track, requesting me to desist from giving the natives of Giessen food for reflection and animadversion. And so they did—next day.

I did not take to the Herr Rechtsanwalt. He was too like Napoleon to be quite good. A sensitive, intelligent mouth . . . a fine head, yet he looked *schlim* . . . and though his bill with regard to Bamberger, the "church-chest-cheat" of Marburg, on whom I had employed him last year, was low, that might have been a sprat to catch a herring. At any rate, the large English herring was now completely in his hands to make or mar. In the light of events I do not see any cause to reverse my first impression. He did not speak a word of English. His wife—well, she was charming, but her "slimness," in the slang sense of the word, jumped to the eyes.

She looked frivolous, and was deep. I wondered what that bosom, covered with blue serge worked in hieratical designs, hid of scheming and some racial malice? She was an uncommonly clever woman, was Linchen, and against all women as a matter of course! Nothing of the suffragette about her! And she held her husband, Captain Walloth and contemplated, doubtless, holding also Joseph Leopold in the hollow of her little undistinguished hand. Joseph Leopold liked and trusted them both. . . . His mother was less penetrated with their virtues; she had had a German husband.

And then they came to dinner at 15 Friedenstrasse the Johns and Captain Walloth and a couple of Herren Professors and their wives, and we played "Dumb Crambo"—and I did, too, in German! Intimations of my German nursery past helped me; I had ever so little the power of arranging sentences, and was not much worried by the verb to be conveyed to the end of a very long one. And next day people began to call. I keep some cards—*Wirkliche Geheimer Regierungs Rath* and a *Geborne Freifrau von O.* . . . Joseph's mother and I duly returned calls and accepted dinners. Successful dinners last till four in the morning, and there is a continual coming and going between the dining-room and the *salon* till then. The last stage is beer. Beer in the small hours! There are also invitations to "Roulette and *Bowle*." *Bowle* is a very nice strong mixture of spices and Rhine wine that would put anyone not to the manner born under the table—and one night put Herr John. He was bothered. They played high—Joseph Leopold had a martingale—and Linchen did not at all like her man to lose money to his client. I enjoyed it. It was the other way sometimes, and then I didn't. In the day, walks, excursions to the Hunnen Graben and the Schiffberg, and many a *Biergarten*, along with the streaming populations getting out of the town on Sundays and holidays.

And then it was time for me to go home. But it was not good-bye. They were, Herr Walloth and all, coming to England next month to combine business with pleasure, see Marwood and Mary, Mr. Chandler, and the King of England crowned.

All this time I was being told, like Bluebeard's wife, not to go queering any pitches by the exhibition of unfeminine curiosity. I must on no account pump Herr John, or ask him how the natu-

ralisation was going on. How could I have? "Dumb Crambo" was all very well, but a legal term would have been utterly beyond my German.

The visit to England was fatal to poor Herr Walloth's peace of mind, thinned him considerably, and made him rather spiteful. English cookery and love! I could not, of course, put them up. My house was like a beleaguered city, full of *consignes* and stipulations. Goneril was averse to meeting me or Joseph Leopold when she came to see my mother, and at last got her lawyer to arrange that we should remain sealed in an inner room till her progress up the stairs had been accomplished. She would announce her visits, like Royalty. But Mary Martindale, alone in the flat, since Joseph's mother had remained at Giessen at her priestly task of impressing the authorities, came to our assistance and took the Germans in. Herr Walloth, large, gay dog, took a room at The Russell, but daily hung about the flat or about my house where Mary was, murmuring, "*Wie geht's Ihnen!*" in luscious tones that reminded me of Giessen. They all dined with me once or twice to meet English people. I forget who. May, I think, and Mr. Hudson and Dr. Westlake. Linchen possessed no evening toilette, and I offered to lend her one. She insisted on *buying it*—a ten guinea gown for two pounds ten—and I soon saw why. She had "roofed it in." A modest German Frau does not unveil except in the harem.

They saw the Coronation. Mary took them to Windsor and I took them to Oxford. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Locke, in their bungalow at Cholsey, offered the Germans hospitality, and we took my bulldog, full of poison, though we knew it not. A week ago he had bitten the milkman, who had retaliated on the dog by a dollop of meat saturated with red lead. I had been a little afraid of Mr. Locke's very Great Dane, but Roy was too languid to close with him, and lay all the afternoon on a rug on the lawn while we went on to Oxford. He died next day.

And before the Germans left we took a car and showed them English country. And, while I and Mary went to see Conrad, Joseph Leopold and Herr John went to see Mr. Marwood at Stowting, who was then really too ill to see anyone, but stretched a point to oblige Joseph Leopold. Marwood spoke German—any language

indeed. And the Johns, having sat with me in Sir Henry Synge's stand in Whitehall, and having seen me and Joseph Leopold walking about in the vast-looking space formed by the street cleared for the Royal carriages, standing cheek by jowl with my old friend Mr. Lloyd George, who talked to me pleasantly, though I verily believe he thought I was someone else, as these Big Wigs will, returned to Germany, well pleased with their entertainment, and their minds properly full of the importance of Joseph Leopold in the sorry scheme of things. Herr Walloth was pleased, too, because, though Mary would have none of him, she went back to Germany with the Johns and he would see her every day.

Roy had died, and now Ann Veronica went. Mr. Hudson was deeply distressed about her, and meeting Mr. Bernard Shaw coming back from Hampstead, so distraught was I that I tried to engage his sympathies, chattering through the rattle of the noisiest part of the Tube. I did engage them, I thought; he listened to my lament in the kindest way in the world. I had carried Ann Veronica about all day like a baby in my two hands, and, after she died, had an autopsy made, and found the bone sticking in her gullet. She had not eaten for days. No, there were no white splashes on the floor of the cage. . . . "Died of exhaustion," I understood Mr. Shaw to say as he went off to the discussion of something else that interested him, i.e., German Divorce Law. I judged that a new problem play was on the *tapis*.

So like Bernard Shaw's contrariness, for Germany and things German were not precisely in good odour just then, and, indeed, every perceptible odour in the world was vile! We were in for a hot July—it was the year 1911, when heat and drought drove men mad, caused the cattle that supported them to be lean and perish, filled the Courts with murder and rapine, inflamed Strike committees, and incensed three nations to the verge of war for want of a little rain that might have stanchied their hissing hatreds.

One evening, as I sat in the little garden at Brook Green with the sister of Joseph Leopold, a man called Springfield, who did odd jobs for her, came running along the railings on the green, to us, sitting under the one black tree with the pale gas-lamp behind, and

with every sign of perturbation repeated a message from Mrs. Hyndman to her husband, both political characters. It was that all the German waiters in London, armed to the teeth, were massing in the big hotels, refusing to wash dishes, but ready to attack under their colonels, acting under sealed orders these long years past. Waiters, of course, are all conscripts. . . . We went on sitting there. Dr. Soskice, perhaps, knew his Pappenheimer.

But we women, in that dusk hour of helpless surmise, sitting in a backwater of Hammersmith, did not consider the message so very wild. These people who, through political intelligences connected with their own businesses, were "in the know," knew that a crisis, "dark and damnable"—as George Wyndham said, who also was in the know—was brewing, and that War, engineered in Chancelleries, might easily break out in the Pantry. In 1908 we were very near war. In 1910 eighty-four thousand conscripts were quartered in Trier, a frontier town. What about Prince von Bülow's article, which Joseph Leopold translated, and which appeared, I think, in the *Morning Post* long before I thought of him? And what about Metternich, Joseph Leopold's friend, staying at Wynyard in that year, along with the editor of *The Times*, my friend, and the obvious sort of a crisis that was on then, when the Prince chartered a motor during the dinner-hour, to the great annoyance of Lady Londonderry, and was driven to Darlington to catch a train south? Already then the Germans were making mischief in Morocco and Bulgaria, and telling the transparent lies which are such a feature of German diplomacy and futility at home and abroad. I have never found a German lie hold water.

But, anyhow, there was no mention in the papers next day of anything of the sort.

I was still ill, worn, carped at, criticised, hopelessly overdrawn on my mother's behalf, trying to fill up the deficit with my own earnings. And Joseph Leopold would not let me do journalism—an aristocratic prejudice of the future Count von Aschendorf. And he was not minding *his* job. The two poets—his lightsome secretary Ezra and he—seemed to be spending their time in rushing about the duchy that he desired to adopt him, and other duchies, in cars. . . . At Homburg and Nauheim, where a great charmer was

. . . escorting her sister to specialists, being very kind, and enjoying himself hugely.

And he had talked to me so much of the importance of convincing Authorities, of the necessity of being there, *irès rangé*, sitting good and proper in his drawing-room when burgomasters called! When—*when* was the naturalisation going to get itself made? Surely skylarking about the Duchy was a mark of frivolity that would disgust Their Profundities?

It *sounded* jealous—alas!

And then the other, perhaps less reasonable, jealousy became a factor in the situation. I came up against the Children. There was a good deal to excuse me. Joseph Leopold was ordered riding exercise by the doctor, and denied himself for the sake of the expense. My novel was returned from America—nothing doing! And there was a bill of his falling due for payment in August. *Ach du lieber Augustin. Alles ist hin! Geld* certainly seemed to be *hin*, and there suddenly came the cool request for a pony and trap for the children to go to church in during the holidays. That set the match to me. It was the last straw. Gently but firmly—the horrid, usual way of The Stinge with a strong sense of past generosity—I wrote and desired him to say that he really could not afford it—these holidays, at any rate.

The deluge of words that followed, of cruel felicities of speech, apt verbal lunges—*le mot juste*, indeed, applied to a palpitating, shrinking Mentor at home! I wrote—not said; there was the rub—fiercely that I didn't hate the children or their existence, but that I had a certain tendency to put him—or even myself—first, and could not think of their *menus plaisirs* till he was out of this nerve-racking wood. And I did so, of my nature. hate insolvency, even temporary:

It is just the chance of my Victorian upbringing and its attendant fetishes. You jolly Ancient Lighters lived and walked quite happily in debt. My mother walked miles to save a twopenny 'bus fare so as to be able to afford the very best blankets. I have never been in debt in my life, or known anybody who was. When I was a child, two pawn-tickets fell out

of the pocket of a coat left in the hall by Theo Marzials, and the maid brought them in on a plate to my mother as if she scorned to touch them. The idea of debt stands at my bedside like a spectre. I am upset even now at my mother's account being unavoidably overdrawn. You seem able to bear the sense of debt; the place in which the shoe pinches you is where it curbs your public generosity.

. . . Yes, I do often think of the injury to the children of being deprived of a father's care, but I don't feel as if a treat here and there or a pony-cart is any compensation. I scorn your Aunt Emma's panacea for forgetfulness of you—if they do forget. Bless me, they're always writing to you!

. . . Yes, I am fierce, and fierce enough to go on being called stingy. Think! Really to-day I gave half a crown to a poor, crocky mother selling matches at a street corner with a baby unweaned in her arms. Chalk that up to me!

I would not write—for a space at least. And then came pathetic reminders of exile that vanquished my pert and absurd resistance. One overwhelmed me:

What ever you do or don't say or keep silent about, don't, *don't* Not Write. For there are cruelties and refinements of cruelties, but, however cruel you are to me in words, I would rather have it than silence. For you must remember, you must believe, that whatever you are or you aren't, you are the only link I have with the visible world.

So on and so on, the voice of the charmer, and I veritably believe that the charm displayed, so far as I am concerned, was what the vulgar call "the gift of the gab," and the intelligent—"style." That useful trick of style at the service of all communications, verbal or otherwise, from one soul to another. The cunning use of inflections when the subject to be influenced is at hand; in absence, the perfectly balanced sentence, the due pathos, the almost biblical English, the note well struck, with leisurely pauses suggesting deep-lying, sub-penetrative emotion, do as well.

Of course, I didn't *Not Write*. I broke the embargo. He was childishly glad of it; love of me, some of the joy of the artist in the *truc* cleverly brought off. . . . He had told me so plainly that what I had done was unforgettable and unforgivable, and now, to soothe me, he observed amiably that he had forgotten and forgiven. So, from me:

If my silence makes you wretched—well, I'll write, and for God's sake don't tell me that I am the noblest woman in the world. And don't be 'resigned,' please! Do you think your phrase, 'It's the will of God!' comforts me much? . . . It is all right for you; you are clever enough not to worry about these things. . . .

He didn't, or he wouldn't, show it. The meagre sentence in *Ancient Lights*, his casual reference to my awful night in Brussels, his theory that when he came to England it wasn't to see me but "to walk my dog," his determined ellipsis of emotional phrases that he used to attempt to put down to official prying which was "limiting to his powers of expression!" And when he didn't write fulsomely about my health it was because, forsooth, with a sort of artistic prudery, he "disliked writing the obvious."

So when I got two letters with news that to me was like the coming out of chloroform to find the tooth out and in the waste-paper basket, I kept very calm, and considered ways and means.

"John seems to think it is all right now about the naturalisation—though of course they may take it back if I don't sit tight enough here to show them I am stable, or my pass-book doesn't look opulent." And later, "John says it is absolutely certain now. Isn't it jolly?"

Jolly, yes; but I insisted on quite a formal statement from him, and got it.

A railway strike was threatened. The men were to go out at eight o'clock. Their temper was bad. The man who sold him ice, Chandler said, and chopped it, had a revolver in the other hand. Chandler was very down generally. He was a bit of a speculator, and had lost a thousand pounds in the New Gallery fiasco. He

adored Joseph Leopold, and was deeply disappointed at not having gone to Germany, for he would have liked the jaunt. But he was my very good friend, and said that we should not want for food so long as he had a shop. The temporary nurse I had for my mother departing could not get her box through the strikers, and had to leave it at Paddington and go home with only her handbag. How about mine to Dover? I could not go on this errand without some clothes to my back. I wrote that I must defer it, that if the men *did* go out on Thursday the whole thing, short of civil war, would be settled in a week. I had great faith in my Mr. Askwith—the strike-settler. But, if it wasn't really over, how could I leave the little principality where I reigned? Awful things might happen any minute . . . there was a chance of famine.

My mother's doctor thought me so ill with heat and dust that he was dying to get me off, and suggested I should go to the Farleys in the Rue de la Paix, where I could be telegraphed for. The only danger for the invalid was want of food. All she got now was milk and eggs, and she could be kept up on tea if need be. There was the good Chandler. I could not procure milk for her, and, as I ate meat, I was by way of being a useless mouth. Things would grow dearer. And I was much weakened by poor nourishment, water and vegetables failing . . . streets unswept and unwholesome dust flying . . . these things did not affect the invalid in her suite of apartments.

But how if it was mob rule over here? Chandler said that it was going to be awful. The doctor said that I should be no good if it *was* awful, by which he supposed that I and Chandler meant an attack by the massed forces of Socialism, and I was more likely to be a mark for frenzy than an old invalid lady.

It was just eight days to the twentieth. I settled to go then, telling Joseph Leopold to await me in Paris and begin letting Farley take all his teeth out.

I got off all right on the twentieth, though I was so ill I could hardly stand, bearing two lovely letters of encouragement from those doyens of my profession, Mrs. Humphry Ward and Mr. Joseph Conrad, which were worth their weight in gold to me at this juncture. Mary A. Ward to "Dear Child." Her "regard for

my father's daughter"! Conrad, dilating politely as he only knew how upon my "services to literature" in the person of his friend and the need of peace, with a capital letter for that friend. And, best of all ghostly comfort, his own letter in my pocket. Germany had accepted him, was glad of him; the burgomasters of the smug town of Giessen, in Hesse-Darmstadt, were in a fair way to hang out flags for him. There had been a big dinner at Hettler's and much wine had flowed . . . Joseph Leopold speaking with his own grim effect of world-resignation—"It's the Will of God!"—a favourite exclamation out of *The Playboy*—complained that, on this wild occasion, only the Johns were silent, dour as usual, conscientiously plugging away at their dinners. . . . Perhaps the German pitfall had been dug even then?

But the attitude of these good people did not seem to matter so much now. The attitude of Giessen, apparently, was acclamation. Dear, kind Giessen! Perhaps, he suggested, I might after all be thinking of giving them a new pump? We would live there at first, and then, perhaps, a castle on the Rhine for next year, when poor mamma . . . We would have no more to do with England, which had so plagued him for the last three or four years, neither of us. England had now no particular jurisdiction over him. All the law he ever wanted again—and he hoped he wouldn't want any more—he would go to Germany for. They were slow, but so sure and so cheap. If he had a child it should be christened in Germany, at Giessen for choice—not Justus Christ, though, like the local chemist where I used to go to get my prescriptions made up. And he would be buried—oh, on the hill of the Schiffberg, in the chapel there. The inn at the Schiffberg where we were going, with the real green boughs trained in wavy lines on the whitewashed walls of the Saal, freshly cut every week till it looked like a Morris wallpaper—the Evenlode. I thought with a grim humour, which never deserts me even if I would, of the famous envelope in my mother's safe at home labelled "Our Grave." What about a plot to be taken, somewhere near the Hunnen Graben, along with the queer Hunnish dead that he had written about in the poem, instead of the slavish populations of Woking? He had just seen a Senegalese actress in an open-air kiosk in the Champs Elysées who had sug-

gested the "rice-pale queen" in his poem, and I was nearly as pale through worry and waiting, though I did not eat rice! So and so much he wrote.

At the Gare du Nord he met me, toothless and feckless, and attempted to see me through the Customs. He had not a grinder in his head, and was still, perhaps for this reason, a little "limited in expression." Farley was putting him in crowns at eight pounds a head; it seemed to me that he could have inserted diamonds at that rate, as he used to do for Australian millionaires—a safe way to carry them about and get them through the Customs. He was a trick dentist, famous for his athletic stunts. It was said that he could take a tooth out of your head and put it back again the wrong way up. He was very appreciative of me, considering me "a unit of some value," and joyously covered four of my perfectly good teeth with gold crowns that another dentist, ten years afterwards, has been kind enough to yank off. Naturally, millionaires were his happy hunting ground. The loss of the *Titanic* docked him of a thousand a year through those good clients Messrs. Guggenheim & Müller. "Served Gug right," Henry James said, for travelling in a walking *ville d'eau*, that only wanted one more attraction—a golf course!

Joseph Leopold had had the last six out yesterday. His mouth yawned at me like a cave—but no, he wouldn't have a temporary set; it cost money! A weird fit of economy!

And even so, with astonishing absence of vanity, and I as crocky in my own way of illness as he, we went together into what was now—so I believed—his country.

Gare de l'Est—the ugliest station in Paris. He lost a hundred-franc note on the floor in front of the booking-office in the stress of taking tickets, and shook loudly for fear of my displeasure. But, for once, I was in the mood to be as *gaspilleuse* as he.

It rained and cleared—and rained again—all in the same breath throughout that day, and in one great and famous clearing, after a heavy shower, we wiped the dim and glistening pane and saw among the blues and yellows of the rainbow-making drops a phan-

tom Cathedral . . . a graceful whiteness that meant spires and pinnacles, far away, posed on the level plain. A cynosure—a landmark—small, because of its great distance, but so pathetic. . . . Rheims under the bow of heaven!

PART II

Things I Cannot Tell—Rheims again in the Dark—The Papers of Naturalisation—Lost or Strayed?—Bellevue—Teeth—Mary's Hunting Aunt—The Vintage—The Daily Something—The Belgian Frontier—The Wind of the Flail—Mrs. Aria's Party—Marwood and Conrad.

THE promise of the rainbow was not to be fulfilled. We could not see the blood-red ray in the spectrum, but Germany was all wrong with us! I had felt it all those three days. And coming back through industrial regions flaring in the night, observing in the flash of stations German names—directions—I asked Joseph Leopold: Where were the papers? The papers of naturalisation and what not? Couldn't I see them? It would soothe me, he could translate them by the light of the little oil-lamp trembling on the roof.

Oh, yes, but he had left them with John. John had got them all.

"Damn John!" I said.

He said:

"Come, come, it's his business."

He hadn't seen Linchen at all this time, and only John himself for a minute. He didn't care to have Linchen see him without a tooth in his head. That was why we hadn't dined with them, been near them even. There *were* no papers to speak of; only a big card with all his history, past, present, and to come, written on it—a sort of *carte-de-civisme*. John—bless him!—was perfectly genuine. He had just taken it to be inscribed, ready for Joseph Leopold when he returned to 15 Friedenstrasse with me and his new teeth in. I understood, or said I did. I was vexed. . . . I like to be documented. It often saves trouble after.

And so on—arguing in terms of love, half angry, half pacified,—I passed out of Germany into Belgium, Picardy, France—lapped, cherished, as one may be once perhaps in a lifetime—unawares rush-

ing past the great sad Cathedral shrouded also in the dark of the future.

Charing Cross again, past the high rostrum without fear: then my home and my mother, a little old woman with immense, unseeing eyes, that took in as much as she wanted of the present—faint eyes turned inward on the holy past of which so soon she would be called to form part. Her thin, fine lips, that had never disclosed a smile since the death of her husband-lover, marked no sneer; her old heart, like the last year's withered sheath of a fruit, held not love. She merely diffused a weird, futile benevolence on her faithful maid and on me, her piteous, homing daughter.

And yet for me now a little space there was calm, assuredness, no more furtive, chaperoned outgoings and incomings, but a head held high and a bold front for what must come. The sparrow among the horses' hoofs that had so far avoided being trampled. I was older. I had nothing, now, that I could hope to keep. Who does keep? What benefit but slips through one's fingers, relaxing at the last like those of a spent swimmer, palms outward? Yet what bane, pre-indicated, is there that cannot with proud intention be faced and borne?

Deep in the gleaming glass
She sees all past things pass
And all sweet life that was
Lie down . . .

I never saw the Papers, or even the Johns again. The war clapped a stopper on everything for everybody. Mary, who was staying with the Johns when war broke out, was hustled back, thrown out of Germany, made to travel to Hamburg in a cattle-train with other useless mouths, and crossed the Thames thinking that Mr. Asquith was a prisoner in the Tower and that London was a ruin. She never was more surprised in her life than when she rolled smoothly into Charing Cross Station.

And also as a result of the war, I might say, like Ophelia, "No, no, my lord, you never gave me aught." He has never made me a present in his whole life except a glove made in the form of a

bear which, at my request, he bought for me outside the Empire the night we went to see Kyasht with Samuel Sidney McClure.

It was the Wind of the Flail.

Arriving from Trier at midnight (Gare de l'Est), we fell in with the reservists, coming in late. We could hardly get through. In the entry to that outlandish station the wives and mothers stood on trucks and carts to pick out their own from the troops disgorged from the last train. I remembered the conversations that I used to hear at Giessen and Trier—sly talk of the reserves—would they be allowed to go home? The terror of the Socialist menace . . . it had passed off, then? Herr Kiderlen-Waechter's diplomacy had been successful, and so the little recruits *were* going home, crowding the great stations of France and Germany in their thousands. But in England they were still anxious. The manœuvres had been cancelled, *because of the drought* (?) on the very day after rain began to fall! The German ones for the same excuse, and the French because of Foot and Mouth Disease! And the French Ambassador, worn out with diplomacy, had gone quietly to bed—not Berlin.

We went to an hotel at Bellevue, so that the patient could sleep in good air and take the boat up to Paris every morning, past the Tour Eiffel and the little wharves along the river side where Yvette used to go to see her *canotiers*. Bellevue, which used to belong to the Pompadour, with the ruins of her *Brimborion*, ivy-clad in the garden, with the little baby woods of Meudon like a shingled head, reached by a zig-zag track of cobblestones, just as it was in the thirteenth century and the nightingales sang as then among the little young trees, which have grown up since they were cut down in the stress of 1870. *Les lauriers sont coupées*. The terrace one dined on, hearing dogs barking in Auteuil down below where, in the dim blue studded with stars of light like the Virgin's mantle in churches, Paris lay.

And we did as Napoleon, in his cynical wisdom, prophesied Europe would do on hearing the news of his demise: "*Elle poussera un grand 'Ouf!'*" It was so nice to be done with the need for chaperonage: arranging for it had been *my* task—Joseph Leopold

was so incurably Bohemian—and I had found it very irksome. It was pleasant to have pretty things sent, pleasant things written to one, and as soon as Joseph Leopold was presentable, we meant to go home and gather up all these joys and advantages and hold a literary salon. That has always been my dream. And, for a space, it was realised. I have not so much to complain of.

Invitations began to pour in . . . parties given in my honour and his. . . . I adored parties only a little less than he did. But it was too soon. Joseph Leopold still looked a—well, what, with astonishing lack of personal vanity, he did not even begin to realise. So there was nothing for it but to stop on at Bellevue where every prospect indeed pleased but where the catering was vile. Though Bellevue was very, very smart, though the band played *Tristan* and *Faust* every night on the terrace and all the French aristocracy and its children played about there, we did not get enough to eat. I spoke to the manager. He promised *quelque chose de plus copieux*. Three minnows on a plate for the two of us! So the teeth followed the dentist to Quend-sur-Mer, a nice, new, raw *plage*—an hotel with stone floors in one's bedroom, with streets that were just shifting rivers of sand, where one wore no stockings. We saw the beach from our windows, and watched, when a certain hissing noise was heard, all the mothers rushing like hens, clucking, to gather their broods under their wings. For why? One of those new aeroplanes was flying low from Berck to Fort Mahon! At lunch and dinner, nuns sitting next us told of the food riots at St. Quentin. The world was really in a very disturbed state! I was busy *un-hareming* my skirt, putting a little petticoat under it, as, Agnes informed me, was moderately the fashion now—to be worn on a visit I was going to pay to Mrs. George Stringer, Mary Martindale's good sport of an aunt, who liked me for my general dash and daring, taking big jumps in other fields than those in which her horse's hoofs were cast.

Mr. Stringer himself wrote and sent me a formal invitation to Hovingham Spa, a tiny, roughish but comfortable inn in the North Riding, where this devotee of the chase had boxed herself and her favourite new hunter. I knew how it would be! All day she would be after the hounds, and her husband and I would wait

dinner, expecting to see her brought back on a shutter. But, when it did happen, I was not there to see. Poor Edith Stringer!

It was time, too, that I went to have a look at my mother, the saddest of all experiences to me now. It was just a little attention I paid her. I would just walk into her room, kiss her and say, "Well, Mamma, how are you?" She would not answer now, kiss back, or even smile. She preferred her nice nurse to any of her daughters. She confounded me with Goneril!

A week in England would do it—did both.

Then I returned, and accompanied Joseph Leopold back into Germany by way of Luxemburg. We arrived there at one o'clock. When I saw Luxemburg, composed of rows of villas with machicolated palings, exactly like Holland Park Road, Joseph Leopold tells everybody I gave one wild scream, and said, "Let's get into Germany," where the vintage was just beginning.

It had been the hottest summer since 1453. The outrageous heat which was Europe's poison was the South German's meat, and the vintage was going to be a record one. This was the true *pax Germanica*—no noise, no quarrelling, an almost Sabbatical hush. Germany was going to get in its harvest. The crop is set anywhere and everywhere, perched on every possible coign, on a mountain—anywhere where it may catch the sun. The vines cover the hills like green fur on the haunches of a big dog. The vine plant, taken singly, is to me a pathetic object, like a doll, dressed like an early Victorian lady, in a gown flounced to the waist, of soft taffetas in faintly differing shades. They reminded me of the late Lady Wilde, who had dressed just like this.

And everyone was friendly, and I was reassured. It was an effect of the vintage. It was not a Gin—but a Vine crawl. We were all of us all day picking grapes, tasting grapes, choosing and buying them in the great tubs in which they came down in carts from the vine terraces. Everybody was doing it. The landlord of our hotel was a great *Weinhändler*, and put us up to bargains, as he would for himself. At the close of the day we came back in the little ambling trains with pickers, pressers, and *Weinhändler*; lovers wreathing each other with vine tendrils, mothers of families sticking them in their hats, while little green, translucent marbles

fell out of parcels and rolled all over the floors of the carriages. It was a madness, and, like all madness, at the bottom of the madness is blood and a human sacrifice. The juices of a human body are sov'ran for the vine root that is to grow into the tree that spreads all over the roof. The best manure is human, but most of the householders have to be content with a pair of old boots or a portmanteau.

Pickers, pressers, and *Weinhändler*, I liked them all; I liked everybody in Germany this time, except the officers, and I hated them so and their beastly attitude—to all men, their own countrymen even—that I could hardly be as civil as Joseph Leopold would have me be. He was now, if you please, a German and a potential officer himself. If war broke out and he were caught on German soil, he must either fight or be shot. Not much, against England.

I resented having to wait in the street at Hildesheim in the sun to have my lunch till the officers had had theirs, standing under the sill of the Speise Saal, peeping under the blind where I could only see their legs and the points of their swords touching the floor as they ate little crabs stewed in wine. I disliked the way every little *Einjähriger* in his skimpy grey suit stood up and let his food run out of his mouth as he saluted, while his superior on his way to the *stammtisch* labelled "*Reservirt*," and in his brilliant and flamboyant cloak, brushed the salt-cellar off my table in passing. I hated to have the deep peace of the woods broken for me a hundred times in the course of half an hour's walk by "Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub" from one of the many concealed *casernes*. I hated to look down from the top of the 'bus and see the naked soldiers washing their clothes or themselves, calmly, out of doors in barrack yards.

And, when you did talk to anyone in the lounge of the hotel, if there was one, it was all about the Socialist menace and the return or no of the reserves that heralds the coming of the autumn as *Mai-Bowle* does that of the spring. Socialism was the reason why there wasn't an ounce of gold in Trier—but there never is in the autumn. Something to do with it . . . some precaution?

Three years of constant agitation had done their work, and I

went back to Spa to be doctored. Spa was not the same. Faces were *morne*. Even then the spectre of war stalked—though humbly for the moment. It had been put back in the cupboard for the time by the address of Herr Kiderlen-Waechter, afraid, as yet, of “*Der Tag*.” But there was a restlessness, a hush among the population, scurrying like autumn leaves . . . darts for safety . . . hedgings . . . while bold spirits in Spa said simply, “Oh, we know, we Belgians, that we—our land—are going to be fought over!” One never could drive very far towards the east without coming across the Squashed Crow of Prussia. One day we decided to go to Montjoie across the frontier, past Malmédy, and to buy cigars and marquetry furniture with the Guilleaumes. The car was at the door to take us when a card was sent in. A reporter from England: *The Daily Something*.

I whispered to Joseph Leopold, “Don’t let him in.” I didn’t want publicity, I deprecated it, although we both of us had new books out. It is simply an odious literary “wheeze” unworthy of either of us. I retreated to the inner room to put on my boots for Montjoie, and while I was stooping I distinctly heard Joseph Leopold offering someone a drink. I looked through the door and saw a mild young man looking very travel-stained, explaining that he had been travelling all night and that his chief had sent a letter announcing his arrival, which Joseph Leopold was declaring he had never received. More conversation, of an exceedingly general character, so far as I could make out.

He was dismissed politely, and we started for Montjoie. But I understood that the young gentleman “rested” all day in Spa, and pottered about, visiting Houtermans, where Joseph Leopold went most nights to play billiards with the son of the house and that interesting rip, Count M., whose relations kept him at Spa for cheapness. And on Monday, as we saw by the papers, the harm was done!

A Frontier! Herbestal is a frontier, and a station too. The frontier is a line like the equator of our childhood, without breadth or thickness, drawn across the road we were to cross. One pic-

tures *vedettes*—sentinels with *képis*, anyway, soldiers—decent fellows who mean no harm, but have been taught for years in a sunlit square to go for a bag of sawdust stitched into the semblance of a man with a bayonet—chatting with the other fellow, exchanging drinks, putting one leg, but not more, over the imaginary line of demarcation. I became, though ill, excited. Bowling along a heath, down declivities and a blue sheen on the horizon that was Germany, I began to shed my wraps, stand up, and ask questions.

“What are those?” of hills that looked like north-country slagheaps, obviously made by man, with wheelbarrows trundled to the edge and allowed to roll down. But the wheelbarrows were derelict; no man was there to wheel them.

“German railway lines,” said Emile Guilleaume.

“But why are they left like that—unfinished?”

“They may not carry them—yet—any farther than the frontier. But they are so as to be ready.”

From that moment war—war between somebody or other—became an actuality to me. Not Germany attacking, not that moment! Just then the boot was on the other leg. France was ready. France was belligerent. Inflammatory posters to that effect were up everywhere.

We were descending, slowly, the hill.

“Germany down there,” Joseph Leopold said. “You’ll see the Squashed Crow in a minute.”

A little cottage, and no garden, squarely set down in the dip. The eagle of Prussia on the signboard, nothing else. It was the *Douane*. The chauffeur shook his head. Nothing to declare! The taciturn officer sitting inside a kind of grille looked us over and made us free of Germany. We saw nothing, but we heard “Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub,” and, as the chauffeur told us, passed two separate army corps being reviewed, and then we came to Montjoie,* a little town like a chromolithograph on the outside of a chocolate box. Small fir-trees, lining both sides of the street with green, brushed the wheels of our car. They were staged, not planted, for the Kaiser had just visited Montjoie, and the yellow paper roses festooning the pink house of *Commerciens Rath O.* had not yet faded after their manner, for there had been no rain since.

Home, for Mrs. Aria's "ten o'clock." Passage bad. Only Joseph Leopold and I and a French lady keeping our ends up, staring at the water pouring through the scuppers; the rest were lying like badly packed herrings, heads to tails, like victims laid out for the car of Juggernaut to pass over them. No room to live, no room to die, no room to be sick in. Five minutes before we were due into Dover Joseph Leopold stumbled to the steward's cabin, where he keeps his champagne. . . .

"You can't be sick here, sir!"

"I can!" gravely, and was.

The anecdote was in *Punch* next week.

We landed on the wrong pier—the trimmings of the other were all swept away—walked in a blizzard to the London train, and I was in a new dress and at Mrs. Aria's by eleven o'clock.

My mother was quasi all right, a partially mummified corpse, in better health, happier, and content with her floor to herself. I was not wanted, and Lucy Byron, now Lady Houston of the millions, lent me her house at Sandgate, nice and near Joseph Leopold's great friends, Conrad and Marwood.

Goneril and Co. were still chipping me, but, like the toad under the harrow, being "larned" to be a toad, I was getting used to it. And Professor Ker, who had been up to see Goneril, went for a walk with her, and reported that she still spoke of me with affection. "I believe you could get on with her if you came. She is fond of you. I told her that I owed a great deal to you—indeed, it is one of the purely happy things in my life that you should have honoured me with your confidence."

But, in spite of this, the pretty little policy of pinpricks that ends by bleeding one to death went on. Criticisms of my method of procuring the comfort of my mother, domestic details, set forth on foolscap sheets with acres of margin. . . ! I threatened to resign my job, which would have put everybody in a hole, so I was let alone for a time.

Then Joseph Leopold took it into his head to get distracted. One night, I remember, there had been various doings in town . . . my maid had been up to town charged to carry a letter *re* the children—you may be sure there was a cheque in it!—to their uncle,

and had come back again in time for dinner with the story of an Implacable Face . . . seen at the station. . . . She had felt awful all the way in the train coming back . . . seeing Those Eyes! She had walked back all the way, her heart in her big boots, expecting to find me scragged!

She engagingly told us all this, with details added and worked up, as she waited at dinner, and when I was lying in bed that night, rather early, Joseph Leopold came up with a white, scared face and asked me if I had heard the front door bell ring a few moments ago. I hadn't. But, he said, it had pealed all through the house. . . .

No more was said that night; but, moved by a sense of imminence, I woke at five, got up, and went over the house. The place was all tied up with odd straps, strings, and dog-leads; a bicycle, out of its place, obstructed the door; my maid was locked into her room, also Lady Byron's cook. Only the dog, a fierce bull terrier I had bought, roamed unshackled about the stairs. And all this for fear that the Eyes had meant mischief.

It was the beginning of a fresh attack of neurasthenia that lasted three whole years, and was responsible for many things, and much private and particular misery. Marwood, called in, said I must get Joseph Leopold out of it. . . . Of all people he best appreciated the situation, and seemed to think my position disastrous. He saw no way out of it unless it was to go where writs didn't run. Paris! Why didn't Joseph Leopold apply for a foreign correspondentship? But—"Ah, *you* can't go, poor thing; you are tied to your mother." And then, sitting with me in the long rock garden stretching right down to the sea, he suggested a plan . . . slimmish. . . .

I demurred. Everybody, he said, would not have been so scrupulous. "Remember that people don't impute higher motives to others than they have themselves."

As for Joseph Leopold, the best cure for him was congenial society. René Byles, now manager of the *Throne*, was got down to stay, and I arranged that Joseph Leopold should see as much of Conrad as might be. The way to Conrad's heart just then was a motor-car, so we used to get one from Clayson's and go out to Orlestone to bring the Conrads and the little boy, Jackolo, back to lunch.

In the dining-room here, from whose windows, as one sat at meat, one could see all the sea between Grisnez and Dungeness: the old sea dog, excitable, eager, was distracted from his lunch—welcoming, describing the nature of the craft, large and small, that sailed or steamed past. He called Joseph Leopold and me “dear”—it was perhaps a sign of affection as far as Joseph Leopold was concerned, but I think it was just a foreign locution, a neat and kind finial to a sentence. He reminded me a little of another quasi-foreigner, William Quiller Orchardson, the Scot with an Austrian grandmother (whom he never let you forget) to whom I used to sit for the Empress Josephine at Westgate. Conrad was adorable. Or we would go to tea or dinner with them in that queer, squat, flat-roofed house, set down in a marshy meadow just off a white, winding road bordered by deep ditches, in which marshmallows grew and low fences over which cattle yearned their heads. Flat, flat—the heart of the country which Joseph Leopold once described, a soft, even level, such as all lives should be—are sometimes—a desert, perhaps, but—fit to be called peace.

While Joseph Conrad and Joseph Leopold were inside discussing serious things—*le mot juste*, or a further collaboration; *Reality* to succeed *Romance*—Mrs. Conrad would walk me along the road. She knew all the people who indirectly swayed my fortunes, and she meant to be kind. In her little foreign way, perhaps learned from her husband (she is, of course, quite English), she hinted at some shadowy horror, some “catastrophe” or other which was preparing for me. Can a catastrophe—which is usually the Will of God—be prepared for a particular person? I then thought kind Mrs. Conrad wool-gathering . . . fallacious . . . trying her hand at her husband’s *métier*. I little knew.

A minor catastrophe—engineered by nobody—occurred inside at tea. I “cheeked” Mr. Conrad—I see it now; but I had played with lions so often in my life that I didn’t anticipate a pat from the paw of one. Sitting at the long, low table that stretched from the window into the dark infinity of the sideboard at the other end of the room, next Conrad, the tea-maker—or was tea over, and had Mrs. Conrad relinquished her seat?—I embarked on a political discussion with the great man. Joseph Leopold was having another

political discussion far away at the sideboard end, and I, unprotected, found myself up against, suddenly, a *soi-disant* believer in the Divine Right of Kings.

I have two subjects on which I am well read and well advised, and one is the French Revolution. The course of my reading had not inculcated a very high view of the political honesty of Marie Antoinette, but I certainly did not approach her problem in "a frivolous, fine-lady fashion" (*vide* Joseph Leopold in his *Life of Conrad*), but I do consider The Austrian's husband, in spite of his wits crowded out by adipose, to be the finer, more responsible character. Yes, I thought that the unfortunate Louis XVI had come to be *unter den Pantoffel* of a, politically speaking, dishonourable woman, who ended by having his head off and her own for the political crime of inviting the foreign invader to come into the country that had become hers by marriage, and which had adopted her for weal or woe. That France made her life a burden to her, and would not let her leave it, seems to me to have nothing to do with the matter. I dared to say this to Conrad, whose every word I was drinking in and whose compelling personality sheerly and starkly fascinated me. I have never seen a man who had this power of re-making everyone who had the honour of listening to him into his own image. . . .

Well, I suppose that I was not sufficiently susceptible for the moment to the ether, the laughing gas of his personality—not quite "gone off," and stupidly disregarded the intense, wolf-like expression which came over his face and ought to have warned me that I was on dangerous ground. The sparrow hopping among the hoofs! I said that I considered Marie Antoinette, as titular Queen of France, to be technically a traitress!

There was a noise and clatter. Conrad brought his fist down on the tin tea-tray, and the cups danced horribly, but not one was broken, as Joseph Leopold has stated. And, indeed, he could not have heard from his place at the very end of the table, his ears submissive to the drone of a bore. . . .

Conrad had said, his eyes darting fire—a blue shade seeming to play about his chin:

"I believe in the Divine Right of Kings."

And no more about it. Mrs. Conrad had not turned a hair. She never did. The perfect wife for an author.

We took them little drives in the car, and as many of them as we could, especially when there were, perhaps, for the moment "only a few goats." For the explanation of this intimate catch-word look at the last few words of *Romance*—"Excellency, a few goats!" That was Joseph Leopold's and Joseph Conrad's mode of intimating that money, or credit, or health, was tight! It is another way of saying, as I do in like conditions, "*Alles ist hin*" ("All is lost").

Joseph Leopold had taken off his boots in the Conrads' anteroom and forgotten to put them on again, driving home with composure in his stockinged feet. They came next day, with a kind note from the very great man to me. Not a word of Marie Antoinette. But maybe the incident had discomposed Joseph Leopold. The note dilated, perhaps in irony?—for under certain pedicular conditions men and women, too, *like* sitting in their stockinged feet—on Joseph Leopold's exquisite regard for the polished floors of the Palazzo Conrad. It had brought tears to the host's eyes when he "looked round on the rough and unfeeling world which encompasseth us all." A little dig at the eternal rival:

"You should see the good Marwood's Alpine boots!"

Aunt Jane and Canon Greenwell—The “Throne”—My Mother does not know me—Adalin—Rebecca West—Cubism and Wyndham Lewis—Selsey and Princess Maleine—The Poison Ring—A Workaday Heaven for me—Goneril—My Mother’s Death—Mary’s suspicions—Treason at Giessen—Joseph Leopold to Germany—To finish his job—Horrors of the Cause List—Boulogne—A Bed of Nails not Roses—Trial over the Telephone—Meet Joseph Leopold on the other side—Conrad recommends Montpellier—His Sense of Colour—I see Carcassonne—Mad Dogs and Horoscopes—The Château d’Amour—Conrad and James—“Patch with purple if you must”—Corsica.

The Governess, a novel begun long ago by my mother and finished by me, had appeared in March. Years ago she had given the manuscript to me, saying I must please finish it, as *she* never could, publish it as a serial, and make what money I could out of it. I agreed. Joseph Leopold helped me. It came out.

“Just the kind of book your dear mother *would* write,” my Aunt Jane wrote from the North, which showed how cleverly I and Joseph Leopold had caught my mother’s style and “joined” her flats. “A nice, quiet book,” my Aunt Jane continued, and was going to lend it to the vicar.

Aunt Jane was now fairly placated. Things had turned out rather better than she had expected. She had been to see my godfather, the Canon, who called her “Janey” in memory of old times, and appeared to be quite proud of his godchild. He thought Joseph Leopold charming—we had been to see him—and so did the Dean and the Archdeacon. But he could not read his books. He liked “shockers” in the *Mail*. And I, from what she heard, was in quite a nice set—good county people, and titles, who lent me their houses at the sea. She would continue heartily to pray for me, if not on the old count, abolished, then on one count or another. And she would intercede for me with Goneril, who did not consider the book good or worth raking up, and thought I ought to have let

it rest and not make money out of my poor mother's infirmities. Goneril a literary critic! That was rich!

This "nice, quiet book" it may have been which led up to Mrs. Conrad's "catastrophe." The poor *Throne* reviewed it kindly and favourably, with portraits of my mother and myself and descriptive remarks below. I was quite pleased when I saw the review, little thinking that the "nice, quiet book" was to be the ground of *fracas*. It was sought to gain an injunction on the ground that its publication was unauthorised . . . the book had *not* been given to me . . . it was not good. My mother, had she been sensible, would have deplored its publication. *Et patati et patata!*

In April my resignation from the Receivership of my mother which in January I had threatened if Goneril went on interfering with me, was again tendered and accepted in the form of a demand from her. Again and again I had to dress soberly—I don't know why my instinct was so to do—and, getting out of a 'bus just before it got to Temple Bar, where my Jacobite ancestor's head had rotted because he opened the gates of Carlisle to the men of his opinion, proceed to the side door in Bell Yard and up the stone staircase to face again the pathetic figure of The Master—my mother's old friend, stricken as she was, striving as she did against fearful odds—to do his work of administering equal justice to her daughters and see that they treated her properly. Just a little family quarrel—everybody a little in the wrong, for nobody is ever quite in the right in a family quarrel, since family passions are apt to run so high.

Blindness is my particular fear and horror. The constant condition of my mother's eyesight was the reason why I had read everything aloud to her since the day she found I could spell and pronounce "ecclesiastical." Two hours a day in the dining-room, sometimes interested, sometimes not. The Master's Clerk delivering slowly the words of important documents, called up my old sense of pity for one so dependent on a mere child and "not able to have anything improper read," as she used to say, laughing. So I sympathised with The Master, though I writhed under his sarcasms.

A disconsolate author was at my side to support me. Sulky, top-hatted, loathing it—and almost me!

René Byles was still friendly to me, and urgent in my service—a stormy petrel, the thorn in his editor's side, the potential wrecker of his darling paper. As early as June there was an action threatened against it—on my account—and again in July. But not till next year did the threat materialise.

I did not dread it. I didn't for a moment think that the Chief and Byles wouldn't come out on top, but it would, of course, worry them and Joseph Leopold a good deal. All through the year I watched the case creeping up the List in the *Telegraph* . . . nearer . . . nearer! The gadfly began to buzz in the June of 1912. It advanced its proboscis and stung in the February of next year.

The saddest thing about the law is the law's delays. There were delays; there always are; all actions seem to require time, and six months seems about the least possible time required for their incubation, just as, in a telegram, you cannot be polite under one shilling and three pence.

Perhaps one cause of delay is that the law, like trades unions preaching down the worker's heart, will not let its workers lay too many bricks in a day. First the challenge . . . then months of sparring and back-chat . . . then the fight, or part of it . . . the backers waiting with their towels ready to flap . . . refreshers . . . and then the knock-out blow, the perfunctory handshake, the thin, shoddy consolations of compromise.

The *Throne* affair wasn't the only thing. There was bankruptcy—another spectre, so it seems to be to most people. I don't think Joseph Leopold minded the idea much. It was minded for him. For myself, I never can see why it appears such a spectre—to one's kind family lawyer, anyway. After all, why should a hardworking man, earning just so much money—part of which is hypothecated to others—by the sweat of his brow and the waste of his mental tissue, object to the law's managing, in return for a small consideration, his earnings for him, leaving him enough to live on and to pay for a desk whereon to write, and a secretary to take down what he does write? Women don't mind bank-

ruptcy as much as men do. He hates the feeling of being compelled to spend ready money, not allowed to run up bills. A bankrupt can hardly use the grand manner. It is the Victorian prejudice against a man's not being master in his own house and everywhere else as well, that still obtains.

And that's not all! My own special law business in which Joseph Leopold had nothing to say—nor wanted to—*re* the nightmare charge of my mother. This is the very natural function of a daughter, as I have said, an act of filial piety required of me; but, since the assuming of it, I had been thwarted, handicapped on all sides, so that I felt it a burden too heavy. And yet, for her sake, I hesitated to lay it down. She must die in her own house, not in a . . .

And the worst, I knew, was to come, when the beloved burden should slip off.

Heavy! She! The little still, silent, shrunken witch of a parent, as light as a feather . . . mentally as imponderable, that I had taken on my back to bear through the bogs and the thorns, under the thudding hail of abuse and blistering raindrops of opprobrium, was coming to be regarded by me in the light of the fairy whom the kind man in the tale offered to shoulder—the little load of mischief that grew to him heavier and heavier, till he became aware that he was bearing the weight of a supernatural being which would weigh him down and crush him in the end.

One version says it was his own sins. . . .

I became a nuisance about the house—a woman of one idea, and that an unpleasant one antithetic to sociability, to the lure of sex, and to the production of good literature. Talk of poverty and the consequent flight of Love out of the window—it does not clear the room of all amatory stuff like a woman with a lawsuit on! I thought of nothing else; I dreamed of nothing else. I used my power of imagination, of “a fire God gave for other ends,” in order to work up the horrors of my own twopenny-halfpenny case. I had nightmares, when I seemed to be dragged backwards and forwards by an angry Goneril, by my hair, up and down the stone floors of the Law Courts.

All this damned me thoroughly with Joseph Leopold who complained bitterly of my natal restlessness, increased by the extra cargo foisted on me by Fate. Why could I not be quiet, possess my soul in patience, take a sleeping-draught at night, and Adalin, that nice new German drug, by day, as he did? I knew he did (four a night, into which I was gradually drafting bread pills). Tebby-Tebb had prescribed that and real Adalin for me! I needed it.

I seem to remember going about this queer, dry, hot summer of 1912 to garden-parties where you were never cool, to suppers under trees where bustling night insects dashed against the lamps and moths flapped and died. I gave suppers, too. I must keep Joseph Leopold amused since my sorrows made me unavailable. I was useless, living in a dream, full of the kind drug which we were both taking. It did not hurt one . . . only made one something of a philosopher. I interested myself in watching Maleine drifting about our house, soothed, positively, by her beauty and the gentle cynicism of the few words she said. In and out, all days and every day.

Did she? Did he? Wouldn't she? It and I didn't matter. . . .

It was no use talking to me for I never listened. I was "only thinking about my sisters." My terror of what might happen to me—locks and keys—warders and prison cells—looked out of my eyes continually.

Joseph Leopold wanted to abate the nuisance. He enjoined short views! If they did eventually succeed in downing me, why, we could simply chuck the whole thing and go back to Germany, as a stand-by, its savage dreariness tempered with little trips to San Sebastian or Montjoie or even to Le Touquet where the great Vardon was playing golf. . . .

For really if I went on like this, thinking of nothing else but law and lawsuits, boring my friends with questions unanswerable till after the event, asking for suggestions as to what I ought to do or ought not to do—a far bigger list—I should have no one but myself to thank for what might happen. No man could stand living side by side with a woman whose sympathies were all afield,

the sodden prey of an *idée fixe*—not of him. Why did I worry about money, a woman of my intellect?

Well, I replied pettishly, because *someone* had to! And I stood to lose every penny I had in the world if I lost my case. And *le mot juste* would be hard put to it to keep me. This contingency it was which gave me my nightmares.

Joseph Leopold, seemed, to the naked eye, to take it all pretty calmly—his own troubles and mine. He sat there in the Futurist room, neatly and with aplomb dictating his daily screed of pages. He preserved at least his literary balance, the pendulum of his thought ticking backwards and forwards with an even motion. Great man! He could concentrate. His inner commotion was subdued by the superior claims of Literature on its votary. Perfect copy flowed from his mouth. No corrections were made or apparently needed; he scorned to look over a manuscript after his secretary had typed it. And why—since the line was cleared as for an express train? No alarums or excursions were allowed to interfere with its mass product. As for the quality—the *avoir-dupois*—that must be left with the critics, whom he little regarded, except perhaps Edward Garnett.

And then Marwood got cross with us. Joseph Leopold and I had made a book which perpetrated one of those literary dastardies unavoidable in his profession and mine—so I firmly submit.

It is a fact not generally realised, except with painters, that all artists must have models, especially the modern ones. That distinguished Academician, Fuseli, ate a raw beefsteak and went to bed and dreamed, not true, but such ineffable scenes of horror that he needed not to use actual models, but relied on the inventions of his sleeping, beef-iodised brain. Modern painters who go to bed soberly and use living models at four shillings an hour do the head from one—expensive—and the hands from another—less expensive—and the bust, say, from their own wife—perfectly cheap. The conglomeration can hardly be called a portrait. When a literature-picture of a total personality is put together it is a blend—an action of A's, a speech of D's, a look of C, the hair or eyes of F. Surely such a composite of aliens cannot possibly be a description of X and whereas the thumbprint is a veritable novel in a

nutshell. But a *roman à clef* or pen portrait—a whole book full of so called pen portraits—would constitute a very ineffectual *dossier* wherewith to convict a criminal.

For I submit that there is not, nor ever can be, in fiction any such thing as a true description of X. I should say that a pretty fair description of X, or X-ess, might be detailed in a dozen yards or so of film print comprising the slow crescence and decrescence of her smile and his frown.

No, genius alone lights on *le mot juste* of a character. The camera description is not just at all. And, just or unjust, very few of us get it and when we do everyone exclaims, "Am I like that? Is my best friend such a poor looking thing?" And everybody else says that it is a shame and an outrage and the author says with sincerity, "No, you aren't and she isn't, but you *were* and she *was* for the fraction of a second." And if it looks wrong it is as much as to say it is wrong—a glance is not perennial and is generally ugly. The sweetest soul alive may appear ugly, wicked, ungracious and terrifying almost, under the Camera Eye. And, since the method is at best so fallible, we artists are apt to superimpose impressions, joining the head of one and the shoulders of another out of laziness, thus entailing the social jabs that empty our drawing-rooms with "cuts" and break the friendships of years. *The Last Ditch* lost me *two* friends. For I am a worse offender, less adroit, more downright, my glance lighting on weaker moments than Joseph Leopold, who seldom, with the exception of the instance I am recording, contrives to give offence. Take his Dionissia, the nurse in *Ladies whose Bright Eyes!* She is a portrait of the Beauty while Nancy, in *The Good Soldier*, is a portrait of Maleine. Very like Maleine indeed. Neither of these models need resent her presentment while, to have stood for Lady Aldington, any woman in England might be proud. And little Mrs. Pett in the same work is a darling. But Mr. Pett! "He, I think," Agnes Farley wrote when the book came out, "would want to shoot Mr. Chaucer in the back" while Countess Macdonald is, so I hear, not best pleased.

Edward Ashburnham and Mr. Dowell in *The Good Soldier* are Joseph Leopold's Jekyll and Hyde—or say two Mr. Jekylls

for neither is really wicked and Joseph Leopold holds no brief for either. He simply doesn't know. I have to support the character of Leonora, the sportswoman, "clean run," but doing evil that good may come and, incidently, driving the poor Girl mad. I was asked several times last year how I liked being called Sylvia—and certainly I do recollect something about a pair of sheets commandeered for the use of the Regiment—my best sheets! I think I should rather sign myself Sylvia-Valentine, for my record suffrage experiences were those of Miss Valentine Wallop and, though my hair is not yellow nor my eyes blue, my nose has certainly more than a *soupçon* of the tilt of the nose of Dante.

It is a pity, but the public must realise that authors, like beggars, cannot be choosers.

At least this particular work gave us Rebecca West, whose literary *flair* and *connaissance du style* could not be deceived or side-tracked, and who, devoting to our effort a whole column of wit and innuendo—as destructive about, as a prairie fire—laid us waste and made us her friends for life. She butchered us to make a holiday for a number of The—won't it be kinder and wiser to blank the name of the publication? She little knew. "Oh, Diamond! Diamond!"

There was nothing else, I said, to do but ask this dangerous woman to tea. It would be turning the other cheek—two cheeks.

She came. She had a pink dress on and a large, wide-brimmed, country-girlish straw hat that hid her splendid liquid eyes, which, however, no brim of any hat could hinder one from apprehending. She kept her feet planted very regularly and firmly together, and throughout the interview retained her handsome handbag (which was rather like a satchel) on her lap, where she had placed it when I said timidly, "Won't you sit down, Miss West?"

She was sweet and reasonable, but not to be kidded. We told her stories about the work in question, and she appeared to believe us. She was very good at listening, and when she spoke she used a voice—not of gold exactly, like the fabled one of Sarah Bernhardt, but, let us say, one compounded of milk and honey, something mellifluous, soothing, like sweet bells rung in tune. And quite

superiorly, ostentatiously, young—the ineffable schoolgirl! She was, in fact, only eighteen, and she already ruled Fleet Street. She is to-day, as Conrad was, a compelling, holding, powerful personality. She *must* count; once she is in a room you cannot imagine it without her, except as a room in Ditchwater. If she wants to hurt you she will; if she wants to be kind to you, well and very good! There is no paltering with the idea of Rebecca; she makes, not so much a splash, as a definite hole in the world.

A slight newspaper hitch—a very little bad blood—was the beginning of a friendship that has lasted. “Fancy that!” as Tesman says. N.B. I have not yet put Rebecca into a book nor she me. But I am sure that if we were both tempted to commit this act and fell, neither of us would turn the other out of Paradise—or each other’s drawing-rooms—therefor. Rebecca is welcome to my poor personality should she care to lay her pen to it. The snub, for me, would rather lie in the direction of not being considered worth “putting in.”

And certainly hers would be a gold mine to me, for I have never known anyone like her. Never! Not anyone! She would be too strange in a book to be convincing, too good to be true. She doesn’t look like anyone else. She still appears much as she used at two years old, according to a pencil sketch that hangs on her walls. There is a lot of Scotch in her—and some other important strain that this contends with. I believe, like me, she has a touch of the gipsy. That shows in our eyes. But where did she get her wide, deep, ruminating brows, classical if anything. . . . I think she is just a little like George Sand and George Sand, to look at the statue by her son-in-law in the foyer of the Theatre Français, shows a queer resemblance to Oscar Wilde. The Mouth.

I don’t know. She is just Life, a little trammelled by the coils of Death that lie round us all, waiting to tighten and squeeze the vitality out of “this Corpse that is Man.” She goes abroad in the winter—“The doctor says if I get ill again I shall die.” And once I had the privilege of helping to nurse her, the most patient soul alive, one who lets you put a bandage on wrong without a murmur.

Though guileless, she is discreet: though frank, withdrawn. Deep as the sea yet adorably frivolous. A good gossip but no mischief-maker. Devilish well informed and yet *très femme*—and that also is very like George Sand. Like George Sand she needs a Dr. Pagello; a De Musset would be too trying for her. Sex, in which Tom, Dick and Harry participate and indiscriminately suffer from, should not be allowed to flog our geniuses.

Rebecca has been educated. Women like her take learning in their stride and use it as I think Instruction should be used; enabling one thus anchored safely to knowledge to play with facts while exercising all the power of detachment of a mind which can, in the midst of its wildest flights, return painlessly and without a hitch to actuality.

The soulless, rigid course prescribed in girls' colleges is a good grounding for style. I have never been educated and so my friend is kind enough to look over my manuscript and deal severely with split infinitives (which I adore) and takes out the redundant commas which I scatter, she says, on my pages as a dressmaker drops pins. . . .

I do not see *her* script. Like the cat, she walks alone in the serried lines and groves of technique.

Rebecca has never lost her slightly academic air *très chic*, worn with a Paris gown; her scientific impartiality, so curiously co-existent with intense and sometimes prejudiced participation in the joys, the crashes, the love and legal imbroglios of her friends. She wrote me a letter after her two days at the trial of Mrs. Thompson which took my rest away as, doubtless, the horror she described had taken hers. Did I realise how Mrs. Thompson had never tried to poison her husband and just wrote "those lies" to her lover from a desire "to dazzle him with her picturesque wickedness, making him fancy she was a Bella Donna or a Splendid Sinner? Isn't it all pathetic and silly?"

What was also so pathetic was this letter was written during the course of the trial of Edith Thompson whose personality had evidently captured the novelist in Rebecca and that, even then, all her apologist fears for the defendant was "life long imprisonment." Because Rebecca put it, Edith Thompson "not being a novelist

speaking to a jury of novelists," could not explain to butchers and bakers that she was a murderess only between the boards of a book and, as Rebecca candidly surmised, had probably "jogged on with her husband not too badly."

Poor man, he paid a stiff library subscription, it seems to me!

She is in the boat with all women. Men, she, sensibly enough, does not hate, for, as the American girl said to Matthew Arnold, "It's all there is." But once, discussing the "sealed air" of a certain novelist whom we both admire and care for, Rebecca opined that "distinguished women with degrees and things get a sort of shut effect" and that this is a result of the Puritanising of women. "Most men have so much to repent that they *must* be amusing to justify their existence."

She came to us at Selsey and tasted the amenities of the wickedest village in the world. More devilment, I veritably believe, comes and goes at Selsey than anywhere else. The fatal secretary of Ruskin, Rossetti's pandar, Swinburne's Atticus, Whistler's victim, Howell, had a country house there and God knows what other lost souls have passed through the long, wild village. Several of them stayed with us. Angels too, for instance, Rebecca and Jane.

Miss West, though reputedly enjoying half mysteries, implied horrors, unfinished scandals such as furnish me with fresh tales of the uneasy, came twice to our cottage at Selsey but steadfastly refused to come again. "Darling, I will never, NEVER, NEVER revisit that *maudite* Yonville l' Abbaye that you insist on patronising." (You see that, what with Joseph Leopold's constant rhapsodising about his elect master Flaubert, the *locale* of Madame Bovary's purgatory became a synonym with all of us for provincial gloom and moral destitution.)

Miss Ethel Mayne, my other great friend, refused to come at all. She writes tales of the uneasy too—I just happened to get the name first, Henry James gave it to me—she is moreover a highly strung, occult-eyed woman.

Miss Gladys Stern went one better and collared all the literary sweets of Selsey without setting foot in the place. She wrote an

uneasy story about a certain Francesca Nugent containing uneasy portraits of me and Joseph Leopold, and succeeded in investing her tale with such competent local colour that anyone—including myself, who have lived there off and on for seven years—would have believed that she was born and brought up in the elfish little Sussex village that will be covered by the sea in quite a countable term of years, all except the church and churchyard, which is, as it should be, on a slight eminence where I intend to lay my bones and those of Joseph Leopold when the time comes.

Our little lonely tree-embosomed cottage by the sea was easily the uneasiest place in an uneasy village, a long, narrow but important carriage drive led by a concealed turning to the furtive little abode where Joseph Leopold and I retired to write. Two tall trees grew at one side of the cottage, their lower boughs caressing its roof, making the parlour dark at noonday while, at night, they painstakingly ground away at the chimneystack like cows or cats rubbing at a post.

And when the wind got up—and when does not the wind get up at the sea?—the noises were like the wailing of a ewe deprived of her lamb or a cow of her calf.

Apart from its modern uneasiness the house was naturally haunted in the good old way. It had been a village school and nothing would persuade the woman who “did” for us that my portrait of William Morris did not represent the schoolmaster whose engaging habit it was suddenly to put his hand down the chimney o’ nights. . . .

Another anomaly—there was an orchard at the back of this cottage by the sea and one was roused in autumn nights by the dull thud of the great “cookers” dropping on the long grass that could only be cut by a tethered goat, since the apple-trees, low and gnarled, like those in the wood of Merlin, grew so close, except for the Well of the World in the middle, that one must take care not to fall into. . . .

Down by the sea was the freak Roman villa of Sir Archibald Hamilton, godson of Queen Alexandra and the son-in-law of the Duke of Cambridge. He is tremendously hospitable. He receives you, now in shorts, bare-legged and bare-chested; now in

the white robes of a Mussulman. His garden is full and kept replenished with Doves, Great Danes, Peacocks and, always, Toads. Inside there are pictures: Canalettos, Sir Joshuas, Romneys, hung very close, three or four gold dinner services fully set out, five or six Wedgwood tea services ditto, baby cannon, firelocks and Sedan chairs. The rooms are so chock full of heirlooms that he is reduced to give you tea in his glorified kitchen, full of antiques. He sleeps under the embroidered satin quilt which I believe once covered the limbs of Queen Caroline of Brunswick. The Duke of Cumberland's wig on its block by the bedside awaiting the barber's combing, and the Steinkerk worn by the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth lies negligently across the back of a chair. . . .

"Atmosphere, dear lady—the magic word atmosphere." He had atmosphere with a vengeance—that of the Regency—the most ridiculously perfect manners and his eccentricity never allows him to overstep what the charwoman called "the boundaries of a gentleman." He dare not be generous. Sometime ago the police, searching a lovely lady at Folkestone for an unauthorised revolver, found on her as well an historic miniature over which Sir Archie, with characteristic courtesy, so she said, had clasped her hand, bidding her stick to it. He could not—it was an heirloom.

Rebecca, who did not dance in those days, used to sit in the gallery of the Cinema Hall with Sir Archie and enjoy his atmosphere while we danced.

I think that this young girl—younger than all of us—very well understood Joseph Leopold and his art—there is not much need for the "and." Joseph Leopold *is* his art. I remember that Frank Harris used to be called in literary circles The Cowboy—Rebecca called Joseph Leopold the Scholar Gipsy—of Literature. She chose to compare his work to that of Velasquez, who "painted less with the hand than by pure thought." That is to say, she senses the artful artlessness of his method, saying often that his prose "falls effortless on the page, like sunlight." She releases him from the tyranny of facts—is willing in his particular case to forgo the setting down of obvious truths. An obvious truth may so easily be a covert falsehood. What she says sweetly Edward Gannett, the critic, says sourly:—"Facts never worry Joseph Leopold



MY SISTER

much!" And why should they? They were made for slaves not for gipsies: for policemen, not for authors. Truth and fiction are probably all one—part of the cosmos which is "ane great lee!"

Like Conrad, who knew Joseph Leopold better than any man, she too realised that he was *sui generis* . . . "Unchangeable," Conrad said once before he died and prophesied to his friend that, "Like the Serpent (which is wise) you will die in your original skin." I wonder? I thought snakes cast their skins every year?

I set down the queer and sudden lesions of thought and plan in this author to some failure of the Intelligence Department which refuses to co-ordinate, often, as it were, preferring to leave the right hand in ignorance of the doing—or sayings—of the left. So that we get the fist which makes such a fierce, unsatisfactory blur of the emotional parts of a novel, and the other, dealing so masterfully and in such exact quantities with moral atmosphere. Yes, moral. . . . This would be The Scholar. And then comes a whopping fictional lie—this would be The Vagrant.

I don't know. One cannot run a theory for long. There was one book—surely all the departments worked together in its production—spurred by an intense generative convulsion. Rebecca West said of *The Good Soldier*:

"Behind it is a force of passion which so sustains the story in its flight that never once does it appear as the work of a man's invention. . . . Union of inspiration and the finest technique . . . is the only reason it can bear up under the vastness of its subject."

Of the three heroines, Florence is a cat, Nancy is nothing, Leonora, so Rebecca said, is "a Northern Light among women to whom marriage meant an appearance of loyalty before the world."

And so it does, in the opinion of half the female population of the British Isles.

"In that last hour," she adds, "when Edward finds real passion, his wife becomes so darkly, subtly treacherous that he and the quite innocent young girl that he loves are precipitated down into the blackest tragedy. All three are lost, and perhaps Leonora, robbed of her fineness, is the most lost of all."

"Sheer instinct unsubservient to reason," as someone else said "moving in a world of nobility and nonsense. . . . Surfaces il-

lumined with flash lights that dazzle the mind." I think it is the author's want of Progressive Imagination that goes with this power of casual and passionate photography which, at times, makes a perfect hash of it all. Well, we shall just have to put ourselves into the mood, let ourselves go—or stay—with the gentle American who tells the saddest story. He is so obtrusively colourless that one does not even remember his name. . . . Oh yes, it was Dowell.

Dowell, the real hero of the story, Dowell, not Edward Ashburnham the rather pathetic, rather ridiculous, sentimental swash-buckler of a lover—of three women on whom Dowell also has a lien. Dowell, the man who does not know but who can write, dropping on one page after another his little mosaics of character, detail and incident so that, in the end, we know all—and more—about these five people and about other men and women who might conceivably find themselves in this awful fix, or other fixes like it—there are so many permutations of pain! We get facts just as they drifted through Dowell's mild consciousness, his quite ordinary intelligence which never takes toll, repetitive, pertinacious, plaintive. . . .

Of course he garbles it—he does not know. But does the priestess of the Delphic Oracle, leaping, swooning on her tripod over the steam and the fumes that issue from the hole in Parnassus know very much what she is saying, does she cohere the scraps and chunks of agonised talk that spurt from her blue lips? Yet, like Henry James's Maisie, what Dowell does not know about this tragic episode is not knowledge.

And, until Maleine—who looks like Nancy—had taken down *The Good Soldier* at dictation and the author had read it aloud to us, I never quite realised Joseph Leopold's moral sense of restraint, his so Greek quiescence before Fate. . . . "The exceeding stupid but patient donkey. . . ." Oh, old Franz Hueffer, how you knew! . . .

They had lived, Edward, Florence and Leonora, the most passionate characters that ever walked a drawing-room or sipped their glasses of spring water at Nauheim! Peace be to their bones.

And then came the rather Sansculottish development of art called Vorticism. I imagine that such flurried art as may have existed just before the outbreak of the French Revolution was as flighty, as inadequate, as ungainly as this. Wyndham Lewis, the "young impassioned priest" of the movement, made me think of Rouget de Lisle singing the Marseillaise, his new piece, to Julie in a suburban drawing-room in France, singing down the Monarchy and all the lilies and languors of life. Vorticism had begun mildly as Impressionism, taken by Society as the innocent freak of certain young artists who could draw if they would. For my part, I think that the sheer good looks of its accepted founder contributed largely to the success of the movement. I knew Walter Sickert first when he was an actor playing in a piece of Gilbert's—*Foggarty's Fairy*. He was the brother of a school-fellow of mine and I used to go to dances at their house. For a sheer vision of beauty, the plate of my memory holds none more satisfying than that of young Walter entering the dance with the beautiful young daughter of William Morris—another school-fellow. So Mediævalism and Modernity—soon to part company—for a moment joined hands.

Impressionism was succeeded by Post-Impressionism, a still more puzzling name to the smart people who paraded the Grafton Galleries, gazing, *la mine effarée*, on Adams and Eves wandering in forests of hop poles, their bodies sewn up apparently in sack-cloth of a dun colour, holding with clumsy, Rima-like hands, large sized bathing towels against their bodies as a sop to the Censor of the day, so exceedingly particular.

This style, if I mistake not, passed into Cubism, then into Futurism and, lastly, into Vorticism. Wyndham Lewis fell out with the Italian Futurists in the person of Professor Marinetti and set to work to inaugurate something nearer to the central heart of things, something still more It. He was hard put to it to describe the neat distinction between the two schools. The simplest image, says he, is to take that of the vortex. "You think at once of a whirlpool. At the heart of the whirlpool is a great silent place where all the energy is concentrated. And there, at the point of concentration is The Vorticist"—in the boiling middle of things,

as I used to say, while the poor Futurist, his ancient art pal, is being driven hither and thither in the whirlpool—à la Dante. Well, Vorticism is a meet name for the flicker of a *genre* that flourished just before the appearance in the world of the Maelstrom of woe that sucked us all down in its vortex. It coincided with my own smash, with Joseph Leopold's—with that of everyone in England who believes that sane art—pictures and existence—cannot live and prosper in flurry of any kind.

Vorticism, well advertised by its frantic, unhinged votaries, was all the rage in 1914 and young Mr. Wyndham Lewis was its prophet. He also is good looking, but not as good looking as Mr. Sickert.

He is quite a good novelist. In those early days he hardly ever spoke. His deep, dark Italian eyes looked out of a buzz of hair flanking on either side the upturned collar of an Inverness cape, which we had difficulty in persuading him to leave off even in the most crowded assemblies. But this taciturn young man contrived, all the same, to give an impression of power. He drew very well and could represent things very well if he liked but I think the Cubic craze, the passion for Parallelograms, was implanted in him at his mother's knee. Old Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff once told me that he had been to tea with some people in Wales whose drawing-room had interested him much. The hostess, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, was the wife of a country gentleman and M.F.H., a descendant of Lady Beaconsfield's first husband. Green Meadow was full of Chinese stuffs and valuable china dotted about the drawing-room. The ceiling was blue with stars and the Signs of the Zodiac done in gold—the Vorticist *milieu tout plein*. What can one expect of a child brought up under the Signs of the Zodiac but angularity? Not in behaviour, of course. Sir Mountstuart said that "two Eton boys with the most angelic manners" received him and showed him around the place. One was named Percy and the other David. David writes. Percy writes and paints too. He is the one that counts.

Ezra Pound constituted himself the Vorticist poet and Joseph Leopold its novelist *en titre*. Dissentients began to leave the fold and reign alone. Young Mr. Nevinson—I remember fear-

some letters and conversations—*le pour et le contre*—left us but Mr. Nevinson is all right and Wyndham Lewis established the Rebel Art Centre in one of the old houses in Great Ormond Street, not a stone's throw away from the one in Queen's Square where another handful of rebels, the Pre-Raphaelites, focussed *their* intransigence, their enamels and their dye-stuffs under the management of Morris and Faulkner, less than a hundred years ago. That also has "moved."

And here—we paid a guinea a year for the privilege—we met and rebelled. Wyndham Lewis had not yet begun to correct and control our clothes. "The Futurist—and eke the Vorticist—wanted" he said, "to make things brighter; wanted people to wear coloured patches on their clothes. . . ." For the moment, Joseph Leopold lectured "absent-mindedly in a tail coat," so the *New Statesman* said, and Maleine and I went to hear him in our nice French dresses—and very badly indeed the pale *teints dégradées* went with the reds of revolution.

The walls in Great Ormond Street were all painted by hand lovingly—and suggested a butcher's shop full of prime cuts more than anything else! The slaughter house allowed on the premises—upstairs—and the blood running down in gouts and streaks on the cornices and folding doors!—the amiable young butchers smiling, in their blue aprons, handing us tea—there was a young Mr. Roberts who wore a red belcher. . . . I always felt rather like a Porterhouse steak myself (or is it a Chateaubriand?) sandwiched between two slabs of meat which were to stand the brunt of the cooking that would preserve my juices and make me exquisitely tender.

We were a chaste, God-fearing crew. 'Art Undressed does not seem to make for sex manifestations or any of the known forms of voluptuousness—quite the other way. Men like cubes walking can have no passions! Wyndham Lewis's great picture "The Schoolmistress," which occupied one bare wall and for which his devotee, Mr. Wadsworth, paid, I am told, a sum running into three figures, might hang in a Salvation Army Shelter to convince Liza and Jane that to this they must come. The lady, clad in dull universal brown, her contours like those of an umbrella turned

inside out and seemingly sodden by rain, suggests nothing less than Temperament. And the particular tone of red affected by this Society and in harmonies of which Joseph Leopold commissioned Mr. Lewis to paint the study in which I sit now—is of the tint of venous, not arterial, blood.

Noise too. Did not Sir Philip Sidney say that the colour of red always made him think of a certain musical instrument? We had a *Blast* evening at the Golden Calf to celebrate the foundation of our Review and it was written on the invitation: "The Manifesto of Rebel Art will be read to the sound of carefully chosen trumpets."

For the Rebel Centre had to have an organ—every movement has to have an organ. The Pre-Raphaelites had to have *The Germ*—the Vortists had to have *Blast*. A blast from the trumpet of an archangel—Gabriel or Lucifer?—at all events "a Scream."

And it had to have a Manifesto to float "The English Parallel Movement to Cubism and Expressionism. Imagism in Poetry. Death-blow to Impressionism and Futurism and all the Refuse of Naïf Science."

There is a column of Bannings and another of Blessings. Mr. Wyndham Lewis was at great pains to create a new inferno where, like Dante, he remorselessly placed all those who had despitely used him and, with him, all good artists and true. Persons who had debased, to his thinking, the currency of art in one way or another. In the other column he damned with faint blessings those mediocrities who had done or could do him no harm—humble beings who, if they have not ministered to the cult, have at least not interfered with it. It is headed with the name of the innocent Maleine. The fun was to open the volume and quickly see where your own name appeared. It seemed to be a matter of dubiety in which column you preferred to find it. Most people plumped for the hottest place. As Edwin James, the barrister, trounced by Judge Bethell, remarked, when his forensic skill was tactfully commented on by his opponent, "My Lord, I have put up with your blame—please spare me your praise."

Blast the Post Office: the late Sir Robertson Nicoll: Blast Berg-



MISS REBECCA WEST AT HOME

son: poor Mr. Filson Young: Cod Liver Oil (with which no one will quarrel): Rabindranath Tagore, from whose recitations ad infinitum we all suffered a good deal about this time: Beecham—and so as to let none pass through the net, the brackets specialise (Pills, Opera, Thomas): the kind Countess of Warwick and the Clans Strachey, Meynell and Thesiger. The Life of Queen Victoria was not yet written but certainly a party permeated by this particular Clan would go well enough. Mrs. Meynell, if she condescended to talk to you, had a very pretty wit: and, as for Ernest, no revue and no party would be perfect without him.

Well, three or four out of those painfully designated in the *Blast* Comminatory List came to my party, where I was selling *Blasts* at half price. "Some of my family in it?" Mr. Thesiger said. "Oh, I must have one." Lady Aberconway, finding herself blest, was no longer eager, also the lady Sargent painted, the Mrs. Leopold Hirsch. She bought one, but returned her copy next day with a nice letter pointing out that I might perhaps doubly benefit the author by re-selling it to someone who hadn't daughters. She really couldn't have it lying about for there was a poem in the volume by Ezra Pound which youth must on no account pick up and read.

There is a great deal of quiet fun in the list of Blessings. It is headed with the name of the inoffensive and charming Maleine. Intentional misspellings are assumed, to break the blow. "Berline" is a polite way of expressing the author of *Mariposa*. Under "Barker," John and Granville share a contemptuous blessing between them (I curse Barker for spoiling Kensington every hour of the day and night). Mrs. Belloc Lowndes felt, I am sure, that she needed no blessings from anyone but her Church. Lady Aberconway was put in to please me. Madame Strindberg, who ran the Club of the Golden Calf for the sake of the set, could hardly escape a favourable mention while the inclusion of poor W. L. George, the fast friend through thick and thin of myself and Joseph Leopold—he appeared for us in Court and wasted a whole week out of the strenuous days that killed him in our service—implies an ironic tribute to a man who was not loved for his qualities, but nobody is.

It was slightly epoch making in its way. People didn't know what to make of it . . . and generally made it wrong. James Douglas said it was an "Epidemic—it would not do to scold it—a splendid spoof—unmatchable in our time." It certainly had spoofed *him* when he permitted himself to scold the editor for his bad taste in printing, at the end of his article on the Vorticist sculptor, a black-edged tablet:

"Gaudier Brjeska. Died in Neuville St. Vaast.
REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

But Gaudier did die at Neuville St. Vaast, of his wounds.

There was some fiction, too. A selection from the earlier chapters of Joseph Leopold's *Good Soldier* under its first name, *The Saddest Story*, and serious work too heavy for the dashing advertisement poster that *Blast* really was. And I was instrumental in procuring for its pages the first short story of a young lady since better known. Rebecca West in her teens, with her tongue in her cheek, taking up the whole problem of man's life and making a delectable joke and parody of it! Good Spoof, indeed, but the public did not see it and, to her chagrin, insisted on regarding "Indissoluble Matrimony" as a tragic experiment. Vehemently she protested against this attitude of the critics. In writing of the attempted suicide of the egregious Evadne, "I was only," she said, "meaning to write a funny story about what were perfectly horrible situations." "Indissoluble Matrimony" is a Conte de Hoffmann, or a tale by the author of "The Diamond Lens," and reviewers took it as if it were a novel by Mrs. Mona Caird or Madame Marie Stopes.

A languid airless summer, rife with Law and Cubism, spent at Selsey with Princess Maleine as guest and play-secretary. Her husband flitted backwards and forwards in his car, now recalling her, now giving her a new leave of absence. Joseph Leopold, playing golf, eating little contraband crabs, writing poems, and helping me with my novel, and taking a car into Chichester on Sundays to attend Mass in his own church, contrived to wile the

summer away. He wrote Impressionist; she painted Futurist; in dress, we two women went a step farther and dressed Vorticist, which was newer than Futurism, than Cubism, than Impressionism, old-fashioned almost by now, but which Joseph Leopold was still practising in his cunning *vers libres*.

The very clothes we rejoiced to wear made us feel like it; they coarsened us, I think. Non-representational art makes for hardness, enjoins the cynicism that likes to look upon the crudenesses, the necessities of life merely—the red of beef, the blue of blouses, the shine of steel knives in a butcher's shop. Better, said Wyndham Lewis, than a dying stag or a virgin in Greek dress picking daisies. But this kind of art died in the war, being relegated chiefly to the camouflaging of ships. A faint echo of it is to be seen in modern jazz.

She was very beautiful, with a queer, large, tortured mouth that said the wittiest things, eyes that tore your soul out of your body for pity and yet danced. She had no physique, as doctors would say; no health, as women would say; and—as no woman would ever admit except me—charm enough to damn a regiment. I used to call her Princess Maleine, that heroine of Maeterlinck who, with her maid, was prisoned in a tower for ten years and dug herself out with her nails. She ought not to have dressed in butcher blue with red blood spots on it. She was much more like one of those delicate, anæmic, mediæval ladies whose portraits are traced on old tapestries, their small waists seeming to be set between the enormous wings of the hennin and the heavy rolls of their trains that spread all round their feet. The modern blouse and skirt of Maleine, born out of her century, always appeared to be falling off her, her crown of heavy hair toppling, her deep brown eyes protesting against Fate and the absurd limitations of behaviour applied to supermen and underwomen. She was no real suffragette, though she had collected with me and rattled a box at stations. Nothing but her eyes protested. Delicately cynical, she accepted things as they were.

She was gentle and patient, even in her desperate illness. In health she was easily the easiest woman to live with I have ever known, and she stayed with me long at Selsey. Intermittently,

when she was well enough, like all the other pretty ladies she played secretary to Joseph Leopold, and, in the evenings, he read aloud to us from the script that she knew well, having taken it down at dictation that very morning. That is the way we did in the heartless days of the Cube and the Line. He would "pay out" in a rope of measured, even tamish cadences, that yet held emotion, the poem that I had asked him to write for *me*.

I had said pettishly:

"You say you believe in a heaven; I wish you'd write one for me. I want no beauty; I want no damned optimism; I want just a plain, workaday heaven that I can go to some day and enjoy it when I'm there."

I confess I had thought of the ultimate cataclysm as, alone in the mornings while the dictation was going on, I wandered round one or other of the three beaches of Selsey, conscious of the drone of a sad sea line on the two other sides, pacing on the edge, without looking where I was going, of the tanks that represented the efforts of the inhabitants of the peninsula to keep the sea in here, let it out there. . . . The Selsey sea is not a Swinburne sea—no sea lions racing in, no foam, no spume; just "*the British Channel . . . like a strip of flannel*" under the moon at night. . . . I would come in late sometimes for lunch, and I would meet the poet rushing, hatless, down the village street, wanting to know if I had committed suicide.

Not yet; although I had my poison ring, like the head of an enamelled, jewelled toad, with the bolt that shot and the lid that lifted, disclosing a cavity just big enough to hold a mere pinch of something deadly. All I had done with my ring as yet was to put a Saxine tablet into the cache in order to unnerve the man who took me in to dinner.

But I realised in my saner moments that authors need Egeriās, and that I, blasted by the family feud, was no sort of Egeria just then. He told me so.

When my Workaday Heaven was quite arranged for me the poet read it aloud in the little dark drawing-room of the cottage by the sea—to me and to Maleine—*con amore, sans façon*, tactlessly evincing his honest joy in his own work. He read it many



OUR COTTAGE AT SELSEY

times . . . the effect was hypnotic. One came to regard the soft, effortless reading on as if it were the solemn unwrapping of a cocoon, the close, gluey sheath being slowly unwound from a newborn soul in religion! The personalities of us three, all in sympathy, good Lord!—perfect or imperfect—were merged. We were all artists for the nonce, a man and two women in the strange solidarity that the mutual pursuit of art for the sake of art can give and maintain.

My poem, mine! "*To V. H. who asked me for a Working Heaven*"—so runs the foreword. "A Frivolous Heaven" would have been a better name, or "A Baby Heaven," or "A Doll's Heaven"—written to please me; to explain and to reveal, as the maker saw it, the truth. I had asked for it. I am brave. I sucked it in and the knowledge it conveyed to me like a potion. For this poem, when at last I got it rounded and complete, set the seal of verity on my surmises as to the nature of one at least of the varieties of amatory experience. I know now that there must be several varieties of this emotion, apart from Love itself, the Emperor moth, the Koh-i-noor—as singular and rare a manifestation as the aloe's blossoming or the building of the Taj Mahal.

"*God is a good man . . . God is a kind man. . .*" A jolly, licensed publican of a fellow! My Poem turned out as profane a piece of work as Grimm's *Kinder Märchen* or the Bible itself at times. The introduction of earthly love into heaven could not but be profane according to the usual canons. . . .

And now for the varieties. The loves of the angels, and this was not quite it! The loves of the triangles, and this was certainly not it—not a straight line anywhere! The loves of the artists, and this, more likely, was it.

Of this variety there are sectional divisions—vegetable Love, which fills the florists and other nurseries, adjusted, as Tennyson says, "with anthers and with dust"; rococo Love; Queen Anne teacup Love; Love of the sponge that merely imbibes the moisture of amatory experience and holds it—God knows to what end unless it is a literary one—in solution eternally; Heine Love and Swinburne Love, which is the love of Nature. . . . Heine Love, which rises now and again, gracefully, to passion, as in *Ritter Olaf* but

mostly homely, cynical, wistful. Not the fabled love that moves mountains, faces the seven deaths of boredom, but the mild, watery variety that, rather than attempt to move the thwarting mass of opposition, sits down in front of it and repeats the great word Agony three times, taking up all one line!

He read it out hastily, in a shyness that was almost shame, hustling off the enormous and useful word, and we were glad to come to the "long, red Rolls-Royce," and the little paper-shop on the *Place* of Lyon.

Love without breadth, depth, or thickness, without dimension. Subjective, purely. For the object—set up like an ikon to be worshipped, perfunctorily, with genuflections and lip-service, a queen in the game of knights and castles—any sort of fetish, glittering, shining, compelling, will do.

That was all done. She got ill and left us. In the autumn we made a pilgrimage to my native Northumberland, and I, taking my courage in my hands, bounced in upon Goneril. I walked into the bedroom of the little thing where she lay on her little bed, a little ill, and surprised her into almost cordiality. It did not last, however; she told her daughter to give me a cup of tea downstairs and peevishly dismissed me, saying:

"Let the lawyers thrash it out!"

They *were* thrashing it out, to the tune of hundreds a year, if that was what she wanted! She was hopeless. I went back to Durham, where Joseph Leopold and I attempted, as usual, to amuse and entertain the kind Canon, grown older and more tetchy. We succeeded. He said that he never had "had such good entertainment in his life." But though he was stout he was unstable as water. He cut me out of his will two years later and left all his money to his nurse and his pet verger—at ninety-six. Oh, these wonderful old men who live beyond the age of reason!

And when I got home my mother did not know me. I had only been away a week. She had bronchitis—the final touch, the mild finale of other more serious illnesses. Joseph Leopold shared the night nurse's duties, taking the first shift, sitting by her dressing-table, playing interminable patiences. The doctor asked me

if I would permit of an operation . . . oxygen . . . it might preserve her life for a few weeks more. I told him that he must consult the family, as I dared not myself sanction the expenditure of three hundred pounds to the estate. Nothing was done. One morning my maid woke me at seven, putting her head in the door and saying:

“Nurse says Mrs. Hunt is very bad.”

My mother had been a tall, large, wide-faced woman. As she lay there, breathing with difficulty: of a dull, ferocious red like a smouldering coal, she seemed a small, brown, wizened changeling. Her grey hair, matted and damp, had the effect of a black hood round her shrunken face with her mouth like a small, round O in it. The nurse had hold of her hand under the bedclothes. She looked at me and said:

“A hundred and ten! She’s burning up.”

She was on fire. It did not last more than a minute after that, and I went downstairs and sent Joseph Leopold to telegraph to Regan and Goneril. At half-past nine his mother came to me. At ten o’clock Regan came. I heard her pass upstairs. I sent a message to her as she stood by her mother’s death-bed, asking for a reconciliation. There was not one. Oh, we Northerners!

At eleven o’clock my solicitor came and informed me that my mother’s will had been put into Chancery. In the afternoon I went to my mother’s room and gazed at her in the shell. She looked twice the woman she had looked when she was dying. Her brow was even, her mouth closed and firm, her nose sharpish and determined. She reminded me of Mr. Gladstone, although I had never seen her look like that in life.

On Monday Joseph Leopold, his mother, and I stood—we were too restless to sit, and, besides, it would have been unbecoming to do so while such a thing as this was happening—and in silence we looked out of the window that gave upon the little garden and the street. It was Monday morning. The funeral was fixed to be at Woking on Tuesday. We were all to be at the London Necropolis station by eleven. All night she was to lie in a shed, chill, bare, and cold, in a chill, bare, and cold station . . . no bright advertisements . . . so that it would be handy for them to shove her

to-morrow into the train that we were all going by. That would be the real funeral. But now the point was to get her there. A sort of a carriage like a black beetle, drawn by one horse, was at the garden gate. There was a noise on the stairs. We heard the front door opened, and observed a posse of men with their burden passing quickly down the garden path and out of the gate. The carriage went off at a cheerful trot down the hill. It was not the funeral, only getting ready for it overnight. . . .

"And that's that!" said Joseph Leopold, with no intention of irreverence. It was with him as with me—the sense of what had been a life bobbing away down the street like a cork upon the ripple of a stream, to be ready overnight for the ground . . . and the Then. . . .

By Christmas Day we were all, Ezra Pound—taking great interest in the cooking of a sucking-pig—Mary, Joseph Leopold, his nephew, and I, installed in a haunted cottage at Farnham Common which had been lent to me. I was poor. My mother's money, on which I had lived and on a share of which, augmented by my earnings, I was to live in future, was not immediately forthcoming. It did not come for four years—a contested will . . . sisters of the same bed masquerading as strangers . . . heads averted . . . the sneer courteous . . . macabre scenes such as one reads of in Victorian novels. And my Aunt Jane still prayed for me while she prosecuted.

Mary had come back from Giessen, where she had been almost living at the Johns, with some very queer and disturbing stories. They were very nice to her—oh, always!—and she must be sure to come again; but there was some sort of situation . . . The captain had proposed and proposed and again proposed—extraordinary condescension for a German—and now was annoyed with her *das sie wollte nicht mein Frau sein*. And he talked to her about Joseph Leopold's affairs. He dimly realised that gossip about Joseph Leopold would be a passport to her interest. He hinted vaguely at conspiracies—against the money of Joseph Leopold, of course—and he heard John say that he would jolly well make old Hueffer sweat, i.e., pay.

Mary didn't know—for Herr John naturally never spoke to a woman about business—that there *was* some actual estrangement between the two men. John had kicked against the delay in the despatch of the *last* instalment, so Joseph Leopold fondly hoped, of his payments. I knew that Joseph Leopold had received a paper informing him that a certain Paul John, of 1 Seltersweg, Giessen, had “posted” him for the sum of £80 in a London bank—made over his debt to the bank, so I understood. Joseph Leopold had written stiffly, enclosing a cheque—“hoping that this is your last charge against me.”

Cherchez la femme! Mary was innocent as the day. Linchen was as *rusée* as they make them. She was very fond of Joseph Leopold, but, at the same time, resented Herr Walloth's defection. Her husband was, on the other hand, *tant soi peu* jealous of her cult for the Englishman. She went with Mary every day to talk to the Rabichs and see to 15 Friedenstrasse, dust the pictures, attend to the window-boxes and put fresh flowers in the vases. Linchen had promised to go on doing it after Mary had gone until Joseph Leopold returned, as he must do, to fulfil the conditions of his naturalisation and do just what Dr. Westlake had said. Joseph Leopold had better put in a good six months more. The Rabichs were dying to have him back. He had given them leave to sub-let discreetly to some lady student at the University or nurse at the Klinik, but they had not chosen to do it.

The idea of the little German Frau, who, indeed, looked far more like a French governess, with her blunt mouth, sharp nose, and small eyes, pottering about the empty halls of the absent *Engländer* amused me and explained much. It would not be odd if John, jealous, and disliking Joseph Leopold, getting as much out of him as he could in the money way, was not so particularly anxious for him to go back to Giessen.

But he just must. I was not any more the flesh-pots of Egypt to him, but he was amiably staying on in England neglecting his affairs in order to help me over the settling of the affair of my mother's estate. Though it bored him, hindered his work, brought him into contact with all sorts of disagreeable people, even though it broke him, he would stay to see me through. A quite fallacious

notion! I should never be through, and, even if I were, it would not be with his help. He didn't help; he was like a dog in a game of skittles; he was even getting into mischief. . . .

I sent him back to Germany.

I was glad my mother was dead. Her "nice, quiet book" had been a boomerang, and had returned to me. It had not even done for me what she had intended since it had been ordered that the money it earned should be paid into court. And it had got Mr. Byles and the journal in which he took such a pride into the most horrible hot water. For months I had watched that insect of a case crawling up the list in the *Telegraph*, and one day I looked at the list for the last time, it was down for hearing.

I damned the Germans and all their works a hundred times a day. That comedy of jealousy in a little, obscure town in Germany, that three-cornered love duel which Mary had hinted at, was that going to stymie things over here in England? It could not be money. But, if it was, why hadn't I forced Joseph Leopold to be quick with his cheque, instead of dawdling till the anxious German gentleman had had recourse to such legal facilities as are at the disposal of foreign creditors? I was restless, because I wanted to get to Germany and see for myself what they were all about. Mary Martindale was going back, but not yet; there was no actual breach with the Johns. . . .

Joseph Leopold was coming as far as Boulogne to take me back to Giessen the moment the case was heard. It would be nothing.

But I did what Mr. Byles advised. He was less optimistic than I. I lunched with his chief one day at the Connaught Rooms, and I begged him over the luncheon-table to permit me and my social interests to be subordinated to the interests of the paper. I thought I was strong enough to stand it. My friends would kindly ignore any apology that he chose to insert, and put the matter out of their minds. But the objection, oddly enough, came from the editor himself, unexpectedly on a high editorial horse. He wasn't going to deface his pages with apologies; it would be ridiculous. He was not much concerned with the amenities of my

drawing-room existence, which was interfering with those of Fleet Street. Bless him, he wasn't responsible for the Birth, Death, and other certificates of Society ladies who wrote novels, and were lucky enough to be reviewed in his paper and share the sweet uses of advertisement with men who had their living to get by their tale of thousand words. And the expense of bringing over people from Germany might easily be as heavy as any possible damages that might be granted against him. The idea of his being fined for negligence in studying the *dossier* of everyone to whom he afforded a free advertisement! He didn't even know if his "sub" wasn't a ticket-of-leave man or a "clink."

What was I to do? His line of defence or absence of defence did not appeal to me. He refused to apologise.

I went about in that fog-bound February . . . seeing about my new book *The Celebrity's Daughter*, dipping into this or that lawyer's office, and to parties at my three clubs; to stay with Mrs. Stringer. I was very "gay." . . . But it was all forced, a worthy affectation of indifference—indifference to the social result, perhaps, of this particular trial, for by that time, as the nurses say, I had been given something to cry for.

The nail of one sorrow is sometimes effective in driving out another, so I once wrote, apropos of some trifle, to Henry James—a speech rather near the knuckle of the life-problems of which dear Mr. James always so deprecated the discussion. Strangely enough, his sympathies had been then aroused, and he had riposted with his first invitation to me to stay with him at Rye, so that, with walks and talks, he might console me. But discuss or even hear for what it was he was consoling me—not he!

And the next thing was—Postponed! For a week! And Joseph Leopold, torn from Germany where he ought to be, waiting for me at the Hôtel Dervaux instead! I made a lightning dash across, taking my new book to show him.

A funny colony of English we made that night in the depressing lounge—British ugliness and French discomfort (i.e., no arm-

chairs). With death in our hearts Joseph Leopold and I tried to wake them up and made them play games—French and English. To one stately lady who seemed to take an interest in me, I lent my new book. The Hôtel Dervaux was being remodelled. Half of it was under flapping canvas, and the draughts as you went to your room were awful. Joseph Leopold had caught cold already. He was very anxious to get back to Giessen, for he had been asked to dinner to meet the Grand Duke, and he wanted to keep up appearances and please the potentate who had been graciously pleased to accept him. I imagined Joseph Leopold spending summers at Nauheim in his train . . . wearing orders . . . court poet and what not—all sorts of local compensations for exile. . . .

Next day there was a telegram. One word, "*To-morrow.*" And there was a storm, and the sea was raging and waves miles high. There was no need for me to go to England, but I thought I would. I waited till the last boat in case the sea went down a little, yet I didn't care very much what became of me. My going was just a foolhardy act that would do nobody any good, not even myself, but I didn't want to be done good to. I had a sort of feeling that the *Throne* defence would fail. Why—*why* couldn't they have gone into the thing properly?

I sat there, wrapped up as well as I could be in a corner on deck, watching with intentness like a cat at a mouse-hole, the waters swirling backwards and forwards into the scuppers, to distract my mind. It was quite distracted enough. I could not even think of being sea-sick, lying crouched up on the bed—of roses—I had made. No, it was nails! *A la* Henry James!

My enemies, what were they thinking and saying? What doing? What further trouble was being manufactured for me? This affair would certainly start some more. And it came when I was more helpless than ever. Mary Martindale was all the sister I had, and my mother was dead. Joseph Leopold——

In consequence of certain symptoms of neurasthenia affecting the central circulation, which have recently manifested them-

selves, I have examined Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer. In my opinion he is not in a fit state to appear in Court. . . .

3, The Grove,

ALBERT E. TEBB, M.D.B.S.
D.P.H. etc.

3, The Grove,
Hampstead, N.W.

I stood all next day in the hall of his sister's house, my ear glued to the telephone. They brought me nourishment, and his mother lent me a smelling-bottle she had bought at Justus Christ's, the Giessen apothecary. About eleven o'clock my solicitor, speaking from court, asked me if I would let counsel watch the case for me as "dreadful things were being said." I agreed. I lunched with them all, and at five I went home, bought a paper, and read the evidence. It did not seem to me very fair or very true, but I believe that counsel are privileged to say what they like in court,¹ and reporters to report what they like, and printers to print what they like.

The next day the same procedure at Brook Green. That second day I had very little notion how things had gone, and, for some reason or other, I could not procure a paper as I went home. I sat still for a long time in the dark, in the empty dining-room at home, alone. . . . The servants, shamefaced, pretended they had not heard me come in, and did not come near me. I was afraid to know what had happened in the Strand, though if I had had a paper handy, I should have looked. But I did not feel equal to going down the hill again to get one. Perhaps they were sold out? Perhaps the case was not over? I got into a rage there in the dark. It ought to have been somebody's business to tell me. I had friends there who must have known what I was feeling. Where were they all? In a sudden panic I turned on the light and flew to the telephone. It was six-thirty. Everybody I asked for seemed to be away. At last I got hold of the gentleman in the City who is kind enough, yearly, to put my income tax in order, as he was

¹ I am wrong; I am told that counsel are privileged to say, not what they like, but what they are instructed to say. Exactly.

leaving his office. "You're wanted on the 'phone, sir." He must have been just putting on his overcoat and cursing the person who was detaining him. His first accents were irritable . . . then he apprehended me. . . .

"Is it left to me to tell you? . . . I am more than sorry. . . ."

His news must be bad; I pressed for particulars.

Three hundred pounds damages!

And slowly I began to realise that I had not, for a moment, supposed that the *Throne* would lose its case—not for one moment! That I would be solemnly brought to book for the mistake of an underling, a person who had never been privileged to set eyes on me or Joseph Leopold or any one connected with our social life and forced to pay three hundred pounds for an unwarranted and unnecessary caption to a photograph of me—and a bad likeness at that!

I could not see why a poor little newspaper should have to be a Haydon's Dictionary of Dates, a complete police *dossier* and a raking *chronique scandaleuse*—its chaste editor *au fait* of all the recondite circumstances of the careers of the meanest of his puppets before he may venture to dilate on any one of them!

It seemed to me that an editor, who does not frequent pot houses and places where they talk, need know no more of the doings that go to make copy for his columns than a man who is introduced to a woman at a dance knows whether she has a husband in the room or not—unless, indeed, he is sufficiently interested in her to ask, and then perhaps she amuses herself with not telling him the truth. Without having recourse to Stubbs, he cannot be sure how many times she has been convicted of forgery. Neither does *she* know whether *he* happens to be an undischarged bankrupt or no. This is socially speaking; I am aware that beyond Temple Bar these things have a deeper significance. I have been told that a good many papers timidly expressed this view, clothing, as Rabelais his unacceptable, rack-deserving political views in filth, in my case with ribaldry—"How happy could he be with either"; and another, "It now costs three hundred pounds to call this lady by the name she assumed"; or another, "A name? What's in a name? Heavy damages."

That night, slightly sleepless, I thought of many things—Might have beens. . . . Panaceas. . . . But chiefly of the terrible incidence of money in civilised—or, if you will have it, decadent—human affairs. For savages delightfully settle their current sexual differences with clubs—or maybe a little poison. Fredegonda, the wife of Clovis, in Tadema's picture, painted when he was under the influence of the Pre-Raphaelites—a large, countrified, fine woman, her hard face crowned with red roses, her heavy eyes gloating on the figures of Galeswintha and Clovis standing hand in hand before the High Priest of the Gauls . . . boys swinging censers according to some savage rite or other . . . Galeswintha, the new love of Clovis. . . .

But the Loves of the Gauls are not practical politics. Money was not the weapon in those days, but the scythed chariot and the funeral pyre.

Well, it was Joseph Leopold's funeral, and it was not properly reported, anyway. Did someone really say in court as I was told over the telephone that very night by one of the witnesses—poor, compunctious Maleine—that he had left his children to starve? That would hurt. The man would cheerfully have died sooner than take them away from a school of an opulence far beyond his means, where he had put them so that they should be brought up in the faiths of their fathers and receive, as well as religion, the benefits of living in the highest possible state of social amenity.

I got a paper next morning and saw that, in effect, the evidence must produce the other impression on the minds of the jury. Counsel's words, as reported, did not give the word "starve," but do reporters always report? And I saw also that by the—shall I say the courtesy of the judge?—a protest *quelconque* had been got in. "All that was possible," since I was not represented.

Letters from my three clubs—natural enough! And one from a very old friend, Archibald Bence-Jones, Barrister-at-Law, putting me wise about the legal bearings of the verdict. I needed not to be down-hearted. Mr. Bence-Jones and his wife were Society people. He grasped, perhaps better than most, the implications of this trial, which might both alienate my clerical relations in the North and strengthen the hands of my enemies in the South. Why

should Mr. Justice Ivory—why should any Mr. Justice Anything—know that I was fighting for my life—since money is the life—with people who thought I was not entitled to the very means of existence! Even Mr. Bence-Jones did not know that. I did not worry Society or my friends with my legal difficulties—what decent woman does? And though he was not merely a Society friend, he realised the enormous importance of attacks on one's social prestige. I must not on any account let this sort of thing interfere with my heretofore butterfly existence. I must come to dinner next Thursday to meet Lord Fitzmaurice and Sir Lauder Brunton. Followed a list of useful, social, compelling names. . . .

You cannot count—that is, you cannot reckon—with the English synthesis of morality, but one must bear in mind that it is *Mr. and Mrs. Grundy*; that the great mind of England, male and female, thinks true and alike about those subjects. That is, it hardly thinks at all; it feels—a little. The English, taken all in all, are the most frivolous nation—that they are more frivolous than the Germans everyone perhaps would concede, but not, as I submit, that the English are a great deal more frivolous than the French. You never know the way the cat bearing the standard of British virtue will jump. This frivolity is evidenced, I think, in the tons of volumes of cheap, shoddy memoirs of people really important, or important in their day, that are put upon the market every year and devoured by British readers who do not object to the life-history of a *cocotte*, supposing she is historical and robbed the nation, say, under Charles II, while Defoe's *Roxana*, the history of a common whore who flourished at the same time, lies *perdu* on local library shelves. Pious readers in France read, from paper cover to cover, a solid history of the Prince de Ligne or of the Duke de Broglie for which the authors have ransacked archives and public libraries. The French must read them, for they buy them. These books would be unsalable in England, where they like “nice, quiet books,” and memoirs of greatish men on whom the limelight must indeed play, but not too fiercely. It is desired, I have heard, by maiden ladies, to keep Rossetti, a poet, a paladin. . . .

Everything in England, especially feeling, it seems, can be reduced to terms of musical comedy. Crowds listen with tears in

their eyes to that song, so cynical and touching, "If you were the only girl in the world, and I were the only boy." But she isn't and he isn't; he knows it and she knows it; and when the apple-cart upsets the courts are there to adjust matters. Why does Miss Sybil Thorndike's clever Joan—a concession to convention at the best—stir the English soul as Sarah Bernhardt's Jeanne d'Arc, grand, simple, quiet, and dull, so to speak, in the poor version she chose to play in, could never do? For Deep calls to Deep and no one hears—in England!

Why is George Robey, and why was Marie Lloyd, the darling of the people, except that this bastard passion, this casually touched sentiment, easily assuaged, appeals to the heavy but frivolous *homme moyen sensuel*—and don't let us forget the *femme moyenne sensuelle*—that English men and English women are, detesting insistence, hating detail and all serious writing—scorning *le mot juste, enfin*?

Well, never should I be able to make an Englishman think—as Henry James said a motor-car would do when it came!—at any rate think as I do and realise the point of Mr. Bence-Jones. For, as I have said, I believe the famous "fair play" notion to be just a mask for frivolity and an insane distaste of going into matters. The Englishman prefers to judge things "on the face of them," but the face lies. He takes what he calls an all-round view, and that is to say a partial squint at the problems which are past his comprehension, but have yet to be taken into account in the scheme of things. He is quite willing for the sake of sentiment as we all should be to let pass, throned in his Palace of Law, a Master in Lunacy, who cannot even see the faces of the litigants brought before him.

I had been before the old gentleman a week ago; he smiled benignantly, after having had papers read aloud to him and hearing the evidence of us all for about an hour, on a desert which he was pleased to call a peace. He was delighted, he said, as we all in the persons of our representatives sat round him, longing to be at each other's throats, but *reculant pour mieux sauter*, that the family dispute was ended.

But I had to go back to Boulogne and attend to my invalid . . . mend him up and send him back to Germany, where his work was

cut out for him. He must buck up and be practical . . . he must bustle John . . . get those papers. I didn't quite like what Mary had told me about the Johns. It sounded as if there might be all sorts of difficulties. Well, I must overcome them, and Joseph Leopold must do his part.

Next morning Mr. W. L. George and Maleine, who had been in court, came to see me, and Mary Martindale to accompany me to Charing Cross for Boulogne. Poor Mary was hysterical. She nearly collapsed at the station when she saw our portraits, very large, on the placards. I said stonily, putting half a crown into her hand, "Buy them all." It gave her something to do. I got into the carriage—there was only one place left—and bestowed myself, and presently Mary, her red lips trembling, her large white face like a rock with the rain running down it, came up bearing sheaves of papers, which she handed to me. I kissed her out of the window. She was going to live at South Lodge for a little while. She had no home now, except in Yorkshire with her aunt, Mrs. Stringer, who had lent her to me in my great need.

Then I opened the papers one by one, swallowed my gruelling, and digested it. Five people opposite me were reading papers on the back sheet of which was my portrait—the one by Hoppé. It was not in the least like me; Mr. Hoppé had considerably given them one for reproduction which would not give me away. I had sat to him about fifty times. At any rate, no one seemed to recognise me. Indeed, supposing I had been a wanted criminal, with police portraits posted up in front of every police court for my identification, I daresay I should, as my mother would have said, "got cannily away."

The train moved out of the station. I had not the face to read my own papers, and thus appose my likeness in the *Daily News* to another example of Mr. Hoppé's talent in the *Daily Sketch*, read by the stolid man sitting on the other side of the carriage. My apparent non-recognisability struck me as quite a good tip for a story—a shocker—and I began to invent a plot. It might soothe me, and make me a cheerful companion to the person I was going to, more stricken than I, and who now had need of me. I was to

be nursetender to the sore heart—sore about a variety of things . . . not about me any more.

Perhaps, like the wife of Richard III at the bier of her murdered lord, my face “was much abused with tears,” and unrecognisable. Mary had not done all the crying.

How should I tell him? Leaving his children to starve! That was what it came to. The rest didn’t matter much.

It was quite dark when I got to Boulogne, and raining. Joseph Leopold met me. I was too tired and too much upset to speak, nor did he as he put me into a carriage and we began to drive up the steep street to the hotel on the heights of the town. Then I found he couldn’t; he had lost his voice completely. The doctor had forbidden him to come out but he had done so and very much annoyed he was about it. I said I could have got up the hill alone. When I recovered and could talk I tried to tell him all about the trial, but he absolutely forbade me to, said he didn’t want to hear a word about it, and with lack-lustre eye, from his bed, sipped the soothing potions of Dr. Lavigne and watched me stow all the newspapers in the bottom of my trunk. The doctor came, and said to me in the passage outside that monsieur was not so very ill, but in such a highly excited condition that it had flown to his chest. He had been delirious, he said, last night. I had better not trouble him with *des affaires* until he asked to be so troubled. Let *him* start a discussion of anything unpleasant. I think Dr. Lavigne knew all about it. He could speak a little English, and probably read the *Paris Daily Mail*.

Next day I went down to breakfast—in this French hotel English tastes were catered for. The large, important lady to whom I had lent my new novel, just out three days ago, sauntered up to the table where I was eating my sole and laid the volume down on the table beside me.

“There’s your book, Miss Hunt!”

She stalked away to her finnan-haddock, and it was Coventry in the Hôtel Dervaux until the doctor allowed us to go. And when he did let us go, it was to the South of France. “*Monsieur avait la poitrine légèrement atteinte.*”

I had never been farther south than Paris in my life before. It

was the usual revelation to me. I hate revelations everybody else has had; every gambler with a system, every Jew with a fortune, every *cocotte* with her *saison à faire*, everybody with a chest, has known what it is to awaken in that early morning and see those cypresses and those goats . . . the blue waters of Cette and the flowers of Nice. We got to a quiet place called Montpellier which Conrad had written to recommend. Years ago he had written to Joseph Leopold from thence, saying it must be seen in winter and in January. This was February. He had raved—Joseph Leopold asserted there was no other word for it—like a miss or a schoolboy about the beauty of the land and the delicacy of the colours at sunset and sunrise. He had owned to missing Joseph Leopold more and more, for “with no other man” except the inheritor of the great Pre-Raphaelite tradition of colour could he share this rapture. Drunk with colour, he would have liked Joseph Leopold there to lean on. He had told me, when I asked him about Montpellier, of the villages perched on conical hills, standing out all around against “the great and weeping lines of violet ranges as if in an enchanted country,” and that it was “magic, all subtle and of colour alone.” I never had thought of Conrad as a potential colourist; he seems to me, in his work, to use merely conventional terms of colour; but that one phrase, “great and weeping lines of violet ranges . . .”

I fancy that he was impressed, as a child is, by the glories of a printed picture-book, in which chromatic shades have been lavishly used. And, at any rate, Montpellier was a wash-out, ugly and ordinary, memorable merely as the place where we lost our luggage. Joseph Leopold was forced to admit that Montpellier must have changed a good deal since Conrad’s time; it was the tamest of white places, and the violet ray at even conspicuously absent.

We went on to Carcassonne, where rabies was raging and all the inhabitants rushing up in droves to Paris for the ministrations of Pasteur. I was nearly bitten, my sympathies being too much with the dog, wild, maddened, chased down the street by a gendarme on a bicycle with a levelled gun. It snatched at my leg, happily long skirted, as it flew past to be killed at the next *carrefour* by a pitchfork that another blue-coated brigand, stationed there, flung at him.

I had read John Galsworthy's story in the *English Review*—perhaps the dog was only being driven mad by agony?

I did not get rabies from my scratch, though the dog star was raging. But I am under Scorpio, the star of artists and harum-scarum people generally. .

I begged for our horoscopes up to date from my versatile doctor. Hopeless! Nothing good for either of us. Herschel in the ascendant! Joseph Leopold's aspects "between the devil and the deep sea," and mine "not much better." "Oh, you Scorpio people!" the dear woman exclaimed. But Scorpio people, though erratic, are sometimes lucky, and, anyway, we always fight the stars when they are against us.

The stars against! I used to sit at the window overlooking the hotel garden and watch them in the cold clearness of the night, when the mistral blew the boughs of the plane-trees like a ragged, jagged curtain, across the steely blue like the coat of a gendarme. No, there never is any help in the stars.

The soil of the hotel garden was like the bread of Provence, pasty, leathery, flaky, and unappetising. There were white cats hanging about at odd times there—sometimes one, sometimes three, according as they died or hid themselves in the brake to suffer—sitting with ridgy backs along the wall. The Plongeur, a Spaniard, threw them about the *plongeon* where he washed the dishes. Joseph Leopold wrote all day on the table in the study they had given him—the lid of the bath in the bathroom, "so seldom used." He had a horror of the return to Germany, where I was egging him on to go. And yet he was not happy here. Can anyone be happy or beloved with the mistral blowing and the live leaves of litigation blowing in at every post?

I was as full of nerves as he. Nerves—the heart's division! We forced a calmness that spoke less of emotion controlled than an utter atrophy of all the springs of feeling. We hardly spoke to each other that month as we walked or climbed. Les Baux, the city of the dead, depressed us immeasurably; the veritable Château d'Amour that I discovered left us cold as its hearthstone, open to the stars. He picked up a small, live scorpion among the ruins of the Presence Chamber, where the Courts of Love were held, while

I collected the pieces of a glass jug, iridescent with age, period François Premier, in the kitchen midden of the Comtesse de Champagne. The small scorpion, no bigger than my little finger nail, lived to visit England and be interviewed by German professors.

I understood now what Conrad had said about the prevailing wind of Provence, warning me of its knife-blade of cold that seemed to pierce in between one's very vertebræ, telling me also that I should not altogether dislike it, though it had half killed him in "a not unpleasant, languorous, melting way . . . a gently active numbness." No, I did not mind it. But it did not inspire me as it seemed to inspire him. I was *not* "sunk in dreams—visions—of innumerable tales," or "floating in an atmosphere of voluptuously aching bones." So he had said. I rather approved of this wind's periodical visitations. For there seemed to be no dust-carts in St. Rémy or in Arles, or in Provence generally; the waste-paper baskets of the Middle Ages, unemptied, the sale or return newspapers, lie all around the walls of Aigues-Mortes. And if the mistral did not come sometimes and blow them away most of the towns of the Midi by now would be like Les Baux, where the air is fetid still.

Conrad wrote that he was jolly glad that Joseph Leopold had got on terms of inspiration with Provence. He could not tell Joseph Leopold how happy he and his wife were to know that their friend was at peace at last. In a little *cahier de vers* that Joseph Leopold sent him he thought he saw a sort of deeper vibration. Deeply interested in that something additional, he was yet glad to find Joseph Leopold unchanged. He himself was working at a novel laid aside some years ago. I think it was *Chance*. He said it was a beastly job, and he had no elasticity. He didn't care if it did well or not. He had been too long at the game, and was heartily sick of it. The feeling that life "is no longer worth the candle," but "altogether a beastly grind."

The old ritournelle! But Joseph Leopold's letters and mine did, said he, cheer a man who had no longer "the consciousness of doing good work."

It was like old times to hear the Jeremiad *d'occasion* that all authors put up now and again. *E pur si muove!*

I sent a little crate of oranges from the South to the father and

mother and to the boy Jackolo, a whole branch of a cherry-tree, crystallised, fruit, leaves and all, as it came off the bough in a mask of white sugar, like an early spring snow shower, from the shop of Justin Lilamond with the lovely name. They reminded me of the Cabellodouro d'oro—something that had been alive, now sealed in a tomb of glistening crystal. But not any more. Conrad wrote to say that Jackolo's teeth were in it at the time he was writing to thank me—the pathetic dark spray all dull and earthy once you break off its mausoleum. And I said that we were coming home, and he wrote that his first duty would be to present himself and make his bow in my drawing-room. He professed himself—Conrad! *Que d'honneur!*—extremely anxious to do so for the sake of the almost incredible sensation of duty combined with pleasure that would be his. "Never happened to me before." He didn't think it could be; "smacks of a fairy tale!" Well, he was going to live through it presently.

And my other mentor was not backward in reassuring me as to my reception. There was no collusion. They were, I fancy, hardly acquaintances. The sailors' toast—"Our wives and mistresses, may they never meet!"—would have suited admirably the respective *sommités* of Conrad and Henry James.

To Grand Hôtel de Provence,
St. Rémy-de-Provence.

21 Carlyle Mansions,
Cheyne Walk, S.W.
March 7th, 1913.

MY DEAR VIOLET,—Yes, I have been intermittently and miserably ill—and have to write short letters in consequence. I am hoping I have really emerged a little, but everything is difficult yet. I am wintering and staying on in London on a more settled basis than for a long time back, and London is on the whole propitious to me. I am glad to gather that "abroad" has practically been so in a still higher degree to you in the sense, I mean, of promoting production, publication, impressions, and what comes of them. May it all be "blessed" to you. If only one could arrive at climates without a big struggle towards them,

I should emulate your great push southward. But I have to make the best here of rather a fine hang in that direction over the reeking, beguiling, romantic river. You seem to me to be in very pleasant places; I could do with them. I congratulate Ford on the intermission of his torture (for me it has been such) of blighted, frustrated work. Well, patch with purple if you must, so long as the piece holds.

Yours, my dear Violet, ever

HENRY JAMES.

I patched furiously. The affairs of Joseph Leopold were, and of course they must be, of primary importance. This year I suppressed all my own disagreeable letters—letters relating to the Chancery suit that was going on full tilt, and letters from friends, kind and otherwise, with regard to his and my own recent appearances in the journals of the United Kingdom. I wished I could have suppressed the letters he got and all and every report in the papers. As a result, I am afraid, of one particular aspersion that had been cast upon him, his old, old friend, Mr. Marwood, wrote and demanded the repayment of four hundred and forty pounds lent long ago for the purpose of defraying the costs of an operation in the family of Joseph Leopold. It was paid on the nail. I was aggrieved at the suddenness of the demand. He and I had talked of it at Sandgate, and he had said that he would wait until my ship came in. My ship had not come in, and his, though I did not know it, was going to cross the bar. Conrad explained it a little in a letter to Joseph Leopold—all about money, very business-like, and ending with the cant phrase out of *Romance* with which this little crowd were wont to signify some degree of financial pressure, an abject condition of low water.—“Excellency, a few goats is the state of things here!” He mentioned that Marwood had nearly died that winter, and had been stimulated by this forewarning to put his house in order—a forgotten instinct which stirs sometimes even in the bosoms of Bohemia. And Marwood was not a Bohemian but a country gentleman, who had livestock and a farm and a wife, and was afraid of another illness which might finish him, said Conrad, trying to make me believe that his sudden

rough usage of us was not the result of the recent case. But about that and other things Marwood had believed what was not, and could not have been. Of that I was sure, or he would have written to *me*, whom he made his pal, before he sent the formal demand to Joseph Leopold. Neither Marwood nor anyone who had ever known Joseph Leopold could, or should, have let themselves believe that he had left his children to starve.

They might very well have done that, for, tremendously agitated, oft weeping as only a German can, he could hardly manage to fulfil his literary engagements. The quality *must* suffer: continual jagging tears the horse's mouth, and the same treatment meted out to a human being produces "the blighted, frustrated work" of which Henry James feelingly spoke, so that even a visit to the South of France, to Carcassonne and Corsica, and such "intermission of the torture" as is implied by these travellers' joys will not restore the tone—at any rate not all at once—of the grey matter on which so much—everything, in fact, for the writer—depends. It had seemed to me that my last job in life was to aid this precious substance to recover and find itself able to produce the tales of bricks—the pounds of flesh—that life, not to speak of honour and the clinging hands of children "whose crying is a cry for gold," demanded.

I have read some of the dreary work done by George Gissing down in a cellar in St. Giles's with not enough to eat, and I am sure it was not his best. Necessity, in the case of an author, is by no means the mother of Invention, and, together with "Endless Agitation," the wrong sort of excitement, the want of emotional lubricants, starves invention—which is imagination—drives fancy away from home, and love out of the door.

It was the accusation of neglect, which I for one knew was unfounded, that lay heavy on his soul. Uncontradicted perforce, of the nature of a privileged communication yet it was bound to foment his sense of injustice. Indirectly, of course, though it wasn't my fault, he laid it to me. He became what is called in society "a bear."

So, when the mad dog, rushing past me in the narrow street, pursued by the gendarme on a bicycle, gun levelled, bit at the hem

of my white dress as I passed, he made no comment, nor did I. Not even when I nearly got lost down the old mine that the Romans used to build Les Baux with! It moved him not. We went to Corsica. He hated it. For, on the Sommet de la Paille, the highest peak of Vizza-Vona, he opened the letter he had been carrying about in his pocket for days, and found no apology—a demand for more money! *Quelle vie!*

Home again—The London Season—Selsey—A Book with Heart in it—The Papers—My Longing—The Rhine Boat again—Four of Us—Germany's Attitude—Queer—Difficulty in finding an hotel—Manufactured delays—Hermeskeil in the Eiffel—Concealed Army Corps—Shadowed—Metz—Arnold Bennett's Book Impounded—The Man on the Box—Backwards and Forwards across the Frontier—Joseph Leopold's Alternatives—"Fight against France or be shot"—Adieu Papers—Giessen my Canossa.

HOME, and my yearly garden-party never so well attended. Cabinet Ministers, by Jove! Dinners in the House. *Fêtes champêtres* at the Monds' in Lowndes Square, Henley with the Harmsworths, the Cabaret Club and all the charming artist rabble who were on the top of the vogue, and then to the cottage we rented at Selsey.

A gorgeous season. I wished my poor old mother had been there to see it. I wished—what did I not wish? That Maleine was not there to see it, that the Beauty was . . . that Goneril still loved me . . . that everyone did not hate me!

Give a dog that bad name of commerce, and he becomes at least capable of small treasons, medium crimes and futile, forgivable stratagems.

I had now my preoccupation, something I wanted to pull off. It did not need money—at least, not much. It needed a journey, simply.

Joseph Leopold was very busy. He was writing a book—a very good book it was going to be; for it was going to contain something quite unusual for him; there would be "heart" in it. I was writing one of my novels, too, in which he always said there was too much heart—that is to say, sentiment. I talked of my plan in the evenings. Joseph Leopold listened politely; but then he always did. His attention was never any sign of interest. It was an old story, and even a new story grew old very quickly to him. He never did start a game, a book, or even a love-affair, that he did not lose

interest in before he came to *finis*. Death! He said it all came to a head then. He cultivated that curious *laisser-aller* notion of shrugging off all to the last, so that, until a man lay on his death-bed, shriven and his peace made with God, he did not himself realise what had been his goal, his object in life, his heaviest sorrow, and eke which woman he loved the best. This idea, later on, when he was in the Army, he erected into a philosophy. And then, as with the heroine of the Laxdala Saga, it might easily turn out that "I did the worst to him I loved the most!" These are the words that William Morris, the bluff saga-man, out of his profound philosophy that he got into the defence of Guinevere and of all women, puts into the mouth of Gudrun when she is old and her grown-up son questions her.

As for his books, Joseph Leopold knew perfectly well the place, as it were, where they broke their backs, where he lost touch with his idea or went off at a tangent and began to hurry up because he was so tired of it. He always wanted to tear them up when they were done. *The Good Soldier* had a very narrow squeak of it, but there was perhaps a good emotional reason for that. . . . I found the sheets that she had written at his dictation in the dustbin at the bottom of the orchard in a hundred pieces, and it took me a week to mend each one separately and send to a publisher.

These tags, these jagged finials of his life, loose-trailing into space! Life, a series of affairs! And one is left with the last affair on one's hands! . . .

But I was different. I had finished *this*—there was *that*—and what I wanted now was to go to Giessen. The Mastermans talked of a holiday all four together, and I suggested that we should go to Germany, down the Rhine in the Rhine boat, which I had done so often.

I painted glowing pictures of it—I could still glow. C. F. G. should study the workings of the Insurance Act which he had helped Mr. Lloyd George to inaugurate, and for which he was now perhaps bearing the penalty in unseatedness. We would go in September. Joseph Leopold would take tickets for the fifteenth.

Before we left England we went to see Maleine in a nursing-home. She had had a terrible operation. It was a bad send-off.

We all dined together on the fourteenth. Like the Irishman, who got up at eight and thought it was seven and found it was nine, we discovered, when the coffee was going round, that we must start to-morrow instead of the day after, so I spent the rest of the evening packing.

The striped roofs of Rotterdam again, the tranquil pastures of Holland . . . Emmerich, the German frontier, dinner there. Plenty of occupation on board; a lovely young English girl being taken back by her sprightly mother to school in Mannheim . . . we fraternised. We all got off together and dined at Cologne, and watched the noble family of Stollwerck spreading themselves all over the plush-covered lounges of their Hotel Ernst, dressed up to the Paris nines, and their proud pulpy noses sticky with natal chocolate. Their young men, in a casual manner, held them embraced. They were stout, and their dresses were made of filmy georgette, the newest thing . . . their lovers' large spatulous hands sank in. . . .

But it was not the same. Germany and the Germans were the same, but their attitude was different. The German temper was queer, as we found out the first time we landed. I should have called it sulky. I was myself inclined to be sulky, and had declined absolutely to get off at Assmanshausen, where we had stayed two years ago, and see if young Mr. Garnett's tortoise had arrived and was now a grandfather. I had made us all decide to get off, leave the boat finally, at Rüdesheim. At Düsseldorf Joseph Leopold took the others ashore to show them the industrial sights of Duisberg and Essen, while I went on with the luggage, alone, to take rooms at Rüdesheim. No one waved at Boppard, but I promised myself a visit to Mimi later.

I had the most unheard-of difficulty in finding a nice hotel. Every hotel seemed to be full—certainly all the nice ones that had been recommended. I secured some rooms, which I fondly hoped would be temporary, in an unpleasant barrack kept by a Dutchman, and waited for the others.

Indefinable, the feeling of estrangement! After I had eaten something—flavourless, almost thrown at me—I walked about on

the road between the terraced hotels and the rushing Rhine. I did not love the Rhine any more. It did not seem to belong to me. No one welcomed me. Nothing tangible, of course; hotel-keepers always have an eye to their money; but it wasn't the Germany of two years ago, with its funny little harvest of "Tags!" that met one at every turn, in every shop, from every village child, from every labourer or beggar on the road. They were dour two years ago; they were sulky now—the very slightest difference, but it told on me with a sense of impending doom. On the opposite banks the German forests lay that I had so gloated on before . . . silent, secret thickets, stretching all the way to the frontier. . . . Once an army had gone through them, gone over them somehow—hundreds of army corps forty years ago on their way to victory at Sedan.

The moment C. F. G. arrived, he disclosed his imperative desire to see the battlefields of Sedan, of Gravelotte and Mars-la-Tour. And, of course, we wanted to see them too. But it took us three days to make a plan. There seemed to be extraordinary difficulty in getting about. The landlord—I have said he was a Dutchman, by the way—was sour and unenterprising. Joseph Leopold spent an hour or two in looking out trains. It would take a day. And there was a fine new line just opened all the way from Posen to the frontier, and, of course, Sedan.

The landlord, his feelings assuaged when he found that we were only going for the day and that the arrangements for the excursion might be, more or less, in his own hands, became more helpful. There was an *Aussicht* in the Eiffel, the first stop of the new railway, Hermeskeil. Joseph Leopold knew all about it. An altar to Hermes eminently worth seeing was there. The place was wild and savage; up till now it had been inaccessible to tourists. We might get lunch. He would procure a carriage.

Late next morning—nearly too late for the train from Bingen—a carriage was in front of the gate. There were two men on the box, and one looked rather like a policeman. Nonsense, Joseph Leopold said, he couldn't be. The coachman was just giving a friend a lift.

Up hill, through the woods, to this village that had only re-

cently been opened up. It looked it—as if its eyes were hardly unclosed, like an untidy, tousled, German baby awakened by an English nurse and very much surprised! Probably, up here, in the very heart of the Eiffel, it had never looked on an English face. And unkempt! Wet, yellow straw was caught straggling all over the stones in front of the inn—loose, and coarse, it was pashed into dun-colour by the hoofs of the oxen and spread by the webbed feet of the geese all over the roads. “Why, it’s all midden!” I said.

But we got a delicious *Mittagsessen*, and then the men went out and looked for the Hermes Fountain, waiting till the train should pass that was to carry us to Metz. When they came back they told us that there was no sign of Hermes or his fountain, but that they had discovered and located two separate army corps round about this unimportant village, whose brand-new station was, therefore, not too big for the entrainment of such numbers of hefty men to be despatched straight across the frontier. And the man who had sat on the box of our carriage got into the train with us, as I pointed out to Joseph Leopold, who told me not to mention it to C. F. G., who was beside himself with delight at the idea of seeing the battlefields. It had been the dream of his life. So was I—excited to death.

At Metz we got out, and passed through the town to a sort of dépôt, where the Dutch landlord had telephoned for a carriage to be ready to take us to St. Privat, the first of the holy places we were to see. On our way to look at the ugly, smug, red Cathedral, we were happy to be able to oblige a forlorn French party of sightseers with change—they were suddenly confronted on their travels with the problem that French money would on no account go down at Metz. Waiting about, I saw the luckless President of the Immortelles, as they called him, and was reminded—as one is, by fits and starts, everywhere in France, as well as by the rustling of the withered flowers rattling round the statue groups on the Place de la Concorde—of the slogan of the Lost Provinces: “Give us back our Provinces! Give us them!”

Well, they have got them now and a little bit more!

This strange, predestined, romantic apparition in knee breeches

and buckled shoes was hurrying down the shady side of the street, his wide, black satin cloak flaring out to the wind, all the rest of him in mourning for the ancient loss. The Society was pledged not to wear any but a sable garb until the restitution, if it ever came.

He was the first person to be killed when the armies of Germany occupied Metz.

We waited over an hour for the fly, all four of us, standing by a wall on which we propped our books and read. Joseph Leopold had Arnold Bennett's new book *The Regent* which the author had sent him. I had a copy of my new one, titled *The Desirable Alien*. Suggestive names both. And when the carriage came the same man was on the box. Schooled, I said nothing.

We were forced by fussy custodians to give our attention to the magnificent building that Germany has erected in order to house a quantity of shards of brass, of bloodstained rags on which are discernible faint lines and patches of sodden galoon that once meant rank and honour. And buttons! I never saw so many—all alike. And this disintegrata of heroes is disposed under glass cases so as to keep the dust off what lay under the unwinking sky for days in 1870, pulped by wind and rain till ranks were levelled and the gauds of officer and private, padded into undistinguishableness. Nothing like it anywhere, this parterre of heroes' "cast-offs!" The toad-like, flattened, humble horror of it recalling perhaps the rag-picker's yards one sees going west by train out of Waterloo, or the greasy, trodden, undistinguished detritus of a rainy Bank Holiday on the Heath. . . .

And then, having looked reverently into some of these glass cases and asked a few questions and offered a few regrets, we were left alone to wander at our will. We wanted most to see the scene of that so oft-painted picture, the Church of St. Privat, crowning the long slant of the hill up from the west that the handful of French and their poor paper-soled boots held for quite a time against the might of Germany, sturdy, young, efficient and fully equipped—so long that it began to seem as if the day might be theirs. For hours Germany drove and flung one brave battalion after another against the brow of the hill, like waves against a pebbly ridge.

And all to be mown down, as they came on, by the French hand-ful in their so superior position.

The Germans were buried in heaps, more or less as they fell—after the ghoul of the battlefields had picked out such poor valu-ables as were to be found—under low, barrow-like mounds, all alike, of the same size, but a little apart. They are there, neat-ened every year by the gardener's scythe. These mounds, like a pattern slightly raised, in different colours, of a shade greener than the groundwork, came to represent to my eyes, dazzled by tears, each a little clump of lives, desiring desperately, every one of them, to breast the hill and be at 'em—an Army of mounds! Dunsinane! That was what made me weep. Defeated endeavour! What though the last clump succeeded, entered St. Privat, and put the little garrison of the church to the sword? Death got the first clump and more than the first.

And all the trappings—braids and tabs and discs, distinguishing marks of the doomed lads who had swarmed up so gallantly to their deaths—lying level beneath the dome of this pious building, in re-ceptacles, padded, glass-lidded, formed a subsoil of an outrageous similarity. No matter. At least, moth should not gnaw these rags or dust dim these relics of a great moment till the Judgement Day—or, at any rate, until the French get to Germany.

The sympathy of England in 1870 was with Germany. Read Carlyle: "Brave, patient, reasonable Germany; peevish, vain France!" And I have a letter that the grandfather of Joseph Leopold wrote to my father all about the tiresome, flippant French, which was an odd letter for Ford Madox Brown to have written, since he had French blood in him as well as Scotch and Welsh. But he had no Irish blood and no sense of humour. Joseph Leo-pold, of course, inherited all these strains and imported the German element.

We got into the carriage again. The coachman was in haste to get us back to Metz. He said so, and spoke of the danger of missing the train. That was pure nonsense. C. F. G. wanted to drive about on to French territory, a little way. He said so. *Tableau!* But it didn't matter what the coachman thought. We drove. C. F. G. had a map of the old frontier and the new. The

frontier had been "rectified" by the victors in a passion of commemorative spite. Nothing would serve them but it must be arranged so as to take in all the clumps, every mound in which a German's body lay, and there were many larger tumuli dotted about as well as in this mile-long field we had been surveying. No Frenchman must possess, or be able even to walk over, the ground that covered a German. The Fatherland must be increased to fit this proposition. And a line of frontier like a wriggling snake, whose every convolution would take up about a hundred yards, was the result.

The driver made objections, but we intended to have our way. It was our carriage that we had hired, and we were going to pay him—unless he disobeyed us. A sensible German realised that we had a perfect right to drive where we liked, having once chartered his carriage, and he had to give in. A nod from the other man on the box beside him!

But, indeed, he did it very funnily, in order to plague us—driving like a snail over German territory, and whipping up his horse and shaking us to bits when we happened to be on French. We held the map on our knees and roared with laughter. When we got into German territory again he was placable, and showed us the very place where the German Emperor stood with Moltke and Bismarck, watching through their field-glasses the last decisive charge of the Germans up the hill, steep as an Alp, of Gravelotte. I climbed it with Joseph Leopold. It was pretty stiff.

And when we got out of the carriage at the station, whence we were to go straight back to Bingen for Rüdesheim, we couldn't find either of our books that we had brought to read in the train. We were late for the train because, as the driver had said, of our silly divagations backwards and forwards over the wavy frontier. Yet the train was still in the station. The kind, considerate, German stationmaster had actually kept back the train for us ten minutes. The express from Metz to Posen—it was like keeping back the Flying Dutchman or the Riviera Express.

I talked of us all going to Boppard, and I would see Mimi tomorrow, but Joseph Leopold said I must not think of it, for we must get away from here—if, indeed, we were allowed to get

away. He was frightfully pessimistic. The police had it always in their power to make difficulties—futile ones, perhaps, not letting us go, say, till they had read through the two seditious volumes we had had about us and that they had impounded. That man on the box was a detective, of course. My new book—all about Germany! The title, too. . . .

It might be all nonsense, but he'd rather not risk further incursions into Germany till he and I were alone again. He would rather not take the responsibility of letting an English Cabinet Minister be hung up here.

All I had heard and read of the Secret Service came into my mind. Germany all at once became *fremd* to me, as it were the scene of one of Walter De La Mare's poems. The silence of the forests where we walked at noonday was now rife with furtive coming and going . . . full of the sound of hoofs, of pursuers' shouts, of horsemen—in Prussian uniform—riding up to the door and knocking, stamping under the starlight . . . asking for people to be given up! Little tame Giessen a danger spot, the flat there entered, and, once the good Rabich terrorised (I could believe no harm of him), ransacked for papers on intelligence furnished by those who all along had been, not hospitable, but inimical. And I had been engineering plans for him to go back there that he might one day be brought out into the Platz, where I had so often seen them exercising, and be shot. . . . A little platoon, rifles levelled against the square sheet of white paper pinned on the breast to mark the heart—tidy people even in murder! And it wouldn't be murder; it would be justice. He had asked for it.

Insensate fear clutched me, made me want to make a dash for the coast and a sight of the cliffs of old England, to have the sea between us and Joseph Leopold's compatriots whom I had been prepared to learn to love.

He soothed me. We were all right. We had some of the might of England with us. We had better, however, be getting home. We had been behaving rather incomprehensibly. That driving of yesterday backwards and forwards across the frontier must have been most puzzling to our coachman and would give him to think the worst. You couldn't expect a German peasant's mind to cope

with those of members of the English intelligentsia. Of course, what they had been afraid of was that we should all get out in French territory, give them the slip, and they'd lose us whom they had been shadowing so carefully!

But, I wondered, were we at all valuable to them? And he replied with a shrug that it looked like it, since they had actually stopped a train for us—a State train, too! “I wonder who the deuce they think C. F. G. is? The English Prime Minister, perhaps? I'll write to my cousin Wilder—he's a Hueffer—in Holland to send me a paper. They get all the German scandals there before they even know them here.”

I said, “There are plenty of Dutch papers downstairs. But, even then, I don't see what it all means—this following and shadowing.”

He succeeded in giving me a shock. He was good at it. First he went very quietly out of the room, came back again, and, standing up beside my desk in the military attitude of attention, said:

“It means me—or War.”

Him, then! His life! That was it. The knocking at the door—the search—the compromising papers. . . . The terror all came back again.

But he was One of Them all right. What could they do to him?

Of course, one knew perfectly well that there was to be war—war some day, not yet! I remembered the overturned wheelbarrow left carelessly, as if it might be wanted soon—the very next minute perhaps—on the truncated embankment at Malmédy, and Emile Guilleaume's words. But how if France were to be the aggressor? What price the wheelbarrow then? Joseph Leopold, earlier in the year, had certainly thought so, the fruit of many conversations with Monsieur le Capitaine Taste, Lieutenant de Garnison of the—Regiment at Perpignan, who shared our table at Jordy's Hotel in the Cité de Carcassonne.

I had often watched, fascinated, standing in the icy, snowy, spring weather on the cobblestones of the street near the east gate of the city, something just like a sortie—a party of soldiers com-

ing in from the chase. I, an arrant civilian, never know what the military can be doing. It was worth while standing there, getting one's feet wet, in the fall of the light, watching to see suddenly over the old grey stone parapet the red jerkins and shining helmets of little troops of soldiers on horseback, riding in over the peaked bridge into the city. With a slight exercise of imagination I could construct the scene of a whole poem of William Morris's—the chill, black wold outside the Pale, dappled with patches of retreating snow, the red against the white, the firm-lipped, determined faces of the men in their casques, a white girl captive slung across the saddle . . . and hear the clink of the bridles . . . no one daring to notice . . . the down-trodden inhabitants of the *cit  * used to the marauding ways of their defenders. Then they would go over the drawbridge into the great square donjon looming strong, stony, in the dusk,—and the early dark would close over us all on our castellated peak in the plain that Carcassonne is.

I told Le Capitaine Taste that I wanted to see the castle inside, and he took us there and introduced us to the Commandant and his Adjutant, a boy with rosy cheeks who had been in England and who just adored cricket. They asked us in, and showed us all round and made much of us. Charming people, but still a cold centre of hatred, and sense of the absolute necessity of feeding it, was implicit in all they said and all they hinted and all they showed us. In the room where they dined the vast, bare walls were hung with tattered banners—taken in a hundred fights—bearing names well known in military history. I cannot remember the names, but none of them were German. But on the north side there was a gap—one banner was gone! Some words, very clear, were chalked up in its room: "*A Potsdam!*" And underneath: "*N'oubliez pas!*"

This legend of the lost banner and its whereabouts was chalked up afresh every day. They *must* go soon and fetch it. They talked of nothing else. They had their *Tag*, too. And isn't Potsdam just beyond Berlin? The boy who had been in England spoke to me as if I must be in sympathy. . . .

Joseph Leopold would be like a dog in a game of skittles if it ever came to that. And suppose it came—*Dcr Tag*, that both

Germans and Frenchmen would rejoice in—while he was in Germany? He was watched now, as he said—yes, he was certainly shadowed. Only the other day we all four had been walking in the woods, and were tired and wanted some tea, but had not seen any likely place for a long time. Lucy and I had volunteered to leave the men, who were fairly content with smoking, and see if we could find a place. Presently we thought we had come upon it—a biggish house of red brick in a clearing among the trees. Very true, it was a house—that is to say, a barracks, not a mile from the town where there was one already. Lucy's purpose wilted, but I went boldly up and asked the sentinel on guard at the gate-house if he could tell me of a place where we could have tea. The sparrow among the hoofs of the German army! Just then Joseph Leopold and C. F. G., having got tired of waiting, appeared at the other end of the clearing. The sentinel looked disturbed, and an officer, I think, in uniform came up and spoke to me quite severely. I propitiated him, and he sourly indicated to me a place where I could get what I wanted.

It was a very nice place and a very good tea, but the man who had given me the indication was sitting beside us, presumably picking up what we said. He didn't hear much. Joseph Leopold had shut me up with a kick under the table and Lucy was always discreet. Yes, it was a fact. We had never, since we got off the boat which we had boarded in Holland, taken a step unaccompanied in Germany, as Joseph Leopold pointed out to me. But I did want to see Mimi, and pleaded for one more day on the Rhine, and then we could all go to Giessen.

He said languidly:

"All right, dear."

I felt that there was something uncomfortable about it, something not quite final, and repeated my request later in the evening.

Then he said, still more languidly:

"Do you want me to be shot or forced to fight against France? If you're prepared to risk that, dear, we'll go."

He found a Dutch paper downstairs—or did Alfred Wilder send it to him?—and there was a paragraph about the Renegade who was escorting the English *Raj* all over Germany. "We Germans,"

polite, stopped our trains for him, showed him our monuments, let him go back to his land and tell the effete, women-ridden English what the Germans did for him to show him courtesy. "Him" was Winston! . . .

They thought it was Mr. and Mrs. Winston Churchill we had trailing about Germany with us!

So the dream-Giessen faded out and the dream rencounter with Herr Paul John. But Joseph Leopold wasn't going to broadcast his dislike of fighting France that he had just expressed to me. He just took the M.'s to Coblenz to show them his country's proudest possession, Ehrenbreitstein, travelling by rail for quickness, while I to practise my German took all our luggage to Spa. Joseph Leopold when I parted with him was like a cosmopolitan stone. . . .

And when Mary wrote she made me think that Joseph Leopold would not have got much out of the Johns, anyway. Paul John was turning rather nasty. Paul John had troubles of his own. She thought that Joseph Leopold, with her love, had much better stop away from Giessen for the present, till their panic had died down. For Paul John had been frightened for his money—at one time. Then he had "posted" Joseph Leopold and been promptly assuaged. Mary said Paul John considered Joseph Leopold far too frivolous, and had not liked his constant skylarking, dashing about in motor-cars to Homburg *et céans*, just on the very days that the burgomasters of Giessen elected to go and call on him. Was he a person likely to be regular with his rates? *Ach, nein*—altogether too French for a German! The nice judge to whom Joseph Leopold used to give English lessons was rather "off" him now, and disposed to think that he would *not* be an ornament to Giessen. Not dissipated, of course—that would have been better, because it would have shown him to be harmless politically. Just what Joseph Leopold himself had said! He was like poor Cassandra, able to prophesy for everybody's advantage except herself. It was Mary's humble opinion that Joseph Leopold had better keep away from his flat for the present, for he would get nothing out of John just now.

Come off it, both of us! That seemed to be that!

Germany had been my Canossa, fatal to me. I had never liked Germans, never felt at home with them. I hated them, in fact. I was not going to present Giessen with a pump or leave my bones on the Schiffberg. I was going to leave my life there, perhaps, which is another thing.

War conditions at Selsey—The Boys—Second Grim Determination—"England shall have my old carcass"—A Commission—Joseph Conrad congratulates Joseph Leopold—To be his Executor—Borys Conrad—Lelöfjel, Conrad and the Field-Glasses—Joseph Leopold in training—James for England—James's Mistress—His Friend Rupert Brooke—His Death and Henry James's—Wilfred Ewart—W. H. Hudson—Plane-Trees and Pigeons—A Future Life—His Unbeliefs—Dorothy Widdrington—Lunch at Whiteley's—My Premonition Realised—Happenings in Kilburn—Broadwater Cemetery—"The Return of the Chiff-Chaff."

WHEN the War broke out Joseph Leopold and I were in Scotland, just over the border, staying with the lady who wrote *Jane our Stranger* and *The Romantic Woman* in which she proved herself by way of being a disciple of Joseph Leopold's. I have described the unrest of that week before *Murder was Out* in a book called *The Last Ditch*, for it was a universal unrest—in our Political existence, our homes and our minds. Electric, the atmosphere! Indeed, after Sarajevo, Joseph Leopold said that anything might happen! Before we left town for Berwick-on-Tweed we had asked our friend Richard Aldington to be good enough to send us a daily telegram—I have them now, seven short slices of history. And, like most histories, a little misleading, for to read them one would have thought that the whole diplomatic object of English statesmen was to keep England out of it—with honour! And when we found we could not, with honour, we came in like other people. Russia mobilising, France mobilising, England mobilising. It was like a rattle of sharp musketry every morning. And we could not get supplies and the servants could not go to church for all around us the cars were being commandeered and the horses shot by their owners *à la* Lady Calmady, not out of spite but to save them from the forced horrors of the campaign. And Wyndham Lewis was painting Mary Borden and Joseph Leopold was writing poetry about Maleine.

Early in the week we all managed to get home. We had none of us much money after the tips had been accounted for. The master of the house had to lend us money for them and for our fares. Wyndham Lewis had got off on Saturday, sitting on a soldier's knee all the way to King's Cross.

And that very evening, as I lay in bed in the room at the top of my house on Campden Hill, I heard the hoarse shouts from down there in the High Street. War was declared from the steps of the Town Hall and the people of Kensington were pleased.

Pleased we all were, in a way—there is at first a glow or, at least, a comfortable feeling about being quixotic. Joseph Leopold was moody; I think he made up his mind then, although it was a year before he applied for a commission. For the moment, we went down to Selsey and he wrote two books in six months for the Propaganda people and nearly killed himself with the effort.

Selsey was most unpleasant. It was eighteen miles from Portsmouth and was scheduled to be razed to the ground by the town's guns the moment the German fleet got anywhere near. That never happened but "Gerty," the German submarine, cruised about in the bay till we got familiar with her. It was very airless, the blinds were closed, we could not open the front door to let a cat out without being flown at by a jealous "special" and we could not get back to our homes after a walk to Chichester without giving the pass-word at the little foot-bridge on the one road that leads to Selsey. In case of a forced evacuation of the population—we did not call it flight—we were not to use the main road. An old cart road was to serve us as far as Chichester and any attempt at sneaking inland by the fields would have been the end of us as a *chevaux de frise* of guns would be mounted in every field to forbid the invaders from the sea.

But, although the big guns boomed all day and all night and tore all our gas mantles, it was only practice and we were allowed out and about and gently assisted to remember the pass-word by courteous members of the 9th Regiment.

And we came across D. H. Lawrence again—his wife, at least. I was much disappointed not to see again "the odd, elongated elf with a golden beard" whom Rebecca had seen walking about

Capri among the mudas and olive-trees. I have not seen him since I went into the Nursing Home, though he seemed to regard me as a sort of literary godmother ever since, as Reader, I brought his poems to Joseph Leopold's notice in *The English Review*. I took his first book to a publisher for him. He considered me, in this game he did not understand, a good business woman, "a better prospector of Tom Tiddler's Ground than I ever hope to be."

Well, I don't know.

"Billy," Mr. Heinemann, was away, talking to Book Congresses in Berne, where his coadjutors always sent the kind publisher with a soul, when he had been accepting too many worthless—as far as salableness went—novels out of the goodness of his heart and consideration for the poor author by whom, after all, publishers must live.

Mr. Pawling read *The White Peacock*—he read it in two days. So I think there was nothing much wrong with the book in the way of being a selling concern. Two days later I had occasion to see him about a book of my own and he said to me negligently, as he was bowing me out—"I'll take your friend's book." He was really jumping at it. He had a *flair*—better than Billy's even. Of course he did not let on how pleased he was to get it and I was thankful on my client's behalf to obtain the exceedingly—as things are now—humble advance that he offered. . . . "Take it or leave it! . . ."

Tom Tiddler's Ground, indeed!

In those days I looked askance—could not away with Mr. Lawrence's style—all his own, and his brusque way of discoursing about intimate things. Joseph Leopold used to write beautifully about "Love . . . the need that a man feels to go to some woman for moral support, for encouragement, for relief from the ever present sense of loneliness, inherent in every human creature . . ." for the assurance of his own worth. Mr. Lawrence, feeling the same, wrote of "longing to stick his head in some hole, say a woman's breast." I don't know which form of expression of the universal emotion I prefer now. The modern, the explicit, but then, being Jamesian in theory and still Victorian in essence, I was shocked.

But I never weakened, nor have I now that I am perhaps more sorely tried, in my cult for the work of the elongated elf. I reviewed him in the *Telegraph*, I interviewed him in the *Throne*, trading on my recollections and the editor was quite pleased with it. And, in December 1912, I wrote to him about *The Trespasser* for I think that the catastrophe of that work, for positive, unblinking horror told with measured, tragic emphasis beats, and still beats, everything in contemporary fiction.

The beginning, the peripatetics—and never do Sigismund and Helena move very far from the stifling Venusberg where they wallow, making themselves ill and miserable—that leads up to that Eschylean suicide—Eschylean without the chorus—after the first few chapters—strikes harsh on the ear and on the tongue and tastes like the last of a consumed box of sweatmeats. I told Mr. Lawrence so, and found that he himself *hated* the book—“It seems a bit messy to me.” But he said that the money gained by it “carried him through the winter and one must publish to live.” He was good enough to comment on the fact that I had not written for a long time—“Did you have a sudden flicker of affection for me which made you write?” That was true. I should have written back at once and owned to this but the next sentence ran:

“No doubt I am a lazy and immoral young man but ought not that to endear me to you rather than otherwise?”

He went into Germany, where he attended the Jubilee Ceremony of Herr Von Richthofen, Chief Minister of the Embassy . . . and married that gentleman's niece. She was already a British subject through her first marriage, and he wrote a charming, understanding letter about it all. I think the nice appreciation of matrimonial values should perhaps have come from the other side. The “Co:” pointed out to the Plaintiff that in this hour they two were only simple men, that the position “brought about by laws that press unequally on the dull and the intellectual” was torture to him and, as he inferred, to the injured husband also. The lady, too, was “afraid of being stunted and not allowed to grow . . . so she *must* live (here it comes, the New Woman note!) her own life.” A further sentence seems to suggest analogy

with the *wesen* of the female spider who is permitted by Nature to grow till she is the biggest, and then eats her small mate—"Women in their natures are like giantesses, they *will* break through everything and go on with their own lives."

This letter made me think of some of my own Suffragette thunder, shadowing the Forcible Feeding campaign, the death by the trampling horses on the Derby Race Course, which I had declaimed and ranted once in The New Reform Club at two gentle poets, D. H. Lawrence and Francis Thompson.

The Wilfred Meynells had lent their bungalow at Greatham to the Lawrences and once, when Mrs. H. G. Wells was staying with us, we all three motored over to see them. And D. H. was not there—he had gone to Cambridge to see Bertrand Russell. But Mrs. Lawrence was in and gave us tea. It was the first time I had seen her. She appeared a handsome, golden-haired, tall woman with a magnificent figure, like a Teutonic goddess. Most charming herself. But it was the autumn of 1914 and reports had just come through and we were spilling over with emotion, obviously anti-German in tendency. Joseph Leopold had just written *Antwerp*, which was being recited all over the place. To get the copy for it he had gone every night after dinner to Charing Cross and hung over the barrier by the arrival platform, watching the fugitive population . . . the dead-faced, black-robed women with their feather beds, their children and their little all pressed to their bosoms . . . in the wild lights of the station. And the thought that some relative of this lady had been the one to drive the troops of fugitives along the road in front of the cannon—that detail was all that had come through, then, was too much for me. One tiny word of reproach forced from an over-charged heart provoked the supreme phrase of contempt magnificently delivered in a foreign accent, not till then betrayed:

"Dirty Belgians! Who cares for them!"

And, after that, in spite of tea and cake nicely handed, it came to a regular mill between me and the Valkyrie. I tried to—and hope I did—wipe the floor with her. Joseph Leopold and Jane retreated to separate corners of the hall to be out of the way—I

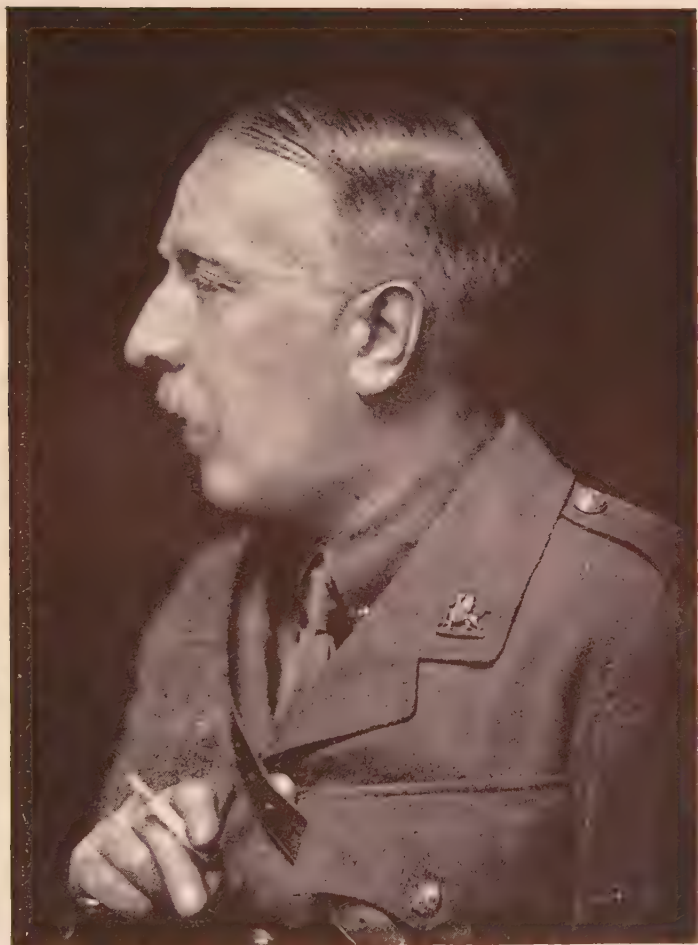
really believe that they were afraid that the sparrow hopping about among the horses' hoofs—me!—might come to some grief. But no, Brynhild meant no harm to me; she only thought me silly and sentimental. When we took our leave she addressed me with wonderful graciousness: "Good-bye. You are very charming and I do hope we shall meet again." My answer was as polite as I could make it in my simmering anguish and desire to get away:

"Good-bye. It is you who are charming but I hope we shall *never* meet again."

We have not. But I met her son who "liked my face," so his mother wrote. His name was Monty and she hoped he would be "somebody" some day. She wanted to establish a "real connection" with her children again but found it difficult since they did not really forgive their mother for leaving them. "It is a fight, like everything else in this life." This young gentleman was "at the age when the intellectual is full of attraction," and would I ask him to tea? She hoped I had good news of Joseph Leopold who was with his Unit "somewhere in France."

Sitting on a hill at Wyndschaerte he was writing a preface for my book and, as he wrote, he could hear, he said, the "thin, sifting sound of the stained glass dropping down on the aisles of the little church that the Germans were shelling." Mrs. Lawrence seemed to have sensed something of this world feeling she was up against, for she wound up her letter to me with the phrase, "All life seems to have centred in France now." And whose fault was that, pray?

Talking of the enemy I could not help remembering that I had lent Lelöff a beautiful pair of field-glasses with which my father had aided his short sight to pick out the peaceful details of cottage roof and harbour light and the perplexing rigging of merchant ships at Whitby. I dreadfully resented the notion that this cranky Prussian officer would be using them to pick out our brave boys—the boys that I entertained and played hockey with at Selsey where we lived during the first year of the war, planting useful vegetables in our garden, renewing our incandescent lamps that the great guns of Portsmouth in their practising, shivered into fragments, and hardly daring to open the front door to let out a cat, much less



THE GOOD SOLDIER

let in an officer. That was as near as I thought the war would ever come to me. But it came to be Joseph Leopold who wanted those glasses, Joseph Leopold who stung by the sight of those very boys going to be killed, made up his mind to offer his "comparatively" old carcass. He forfeited his hard-won nationality, swore allegiance to King George, and took a commission in the British Army.

The thing was sprung on me. I went up to meet him from Selsey, on his returning from town, where he had been to take some copy to Buckingham House, allotted to the Ministry of Health. Oddly named, since it was there men of good will sat all day considering how best to deprive people of it. I waited at the station gate in the shrouded darkness of the car. A man I hardly seemed to know though I knew his coat, with a *serviette* full of papers under his arm, got in beside me and said dryly, in incisive, biting tones that were strange to me, as his secretary got in after him and covered his speech a little:

"I have got my commission."

Later, when I was lying on my bed crying:

"It is a grim determination . . . the second in my life. The first was to get you."

And it was just as it had been at Bittong's that evening long ago—only four years since—when he had returned from Giessen and, over the dinner-table, had announced his "grim determination" to remain behind in Germany. Weak natures only progress like this—by sudden leaps and bounds. Then, as now, he sheltered behind the presence of a third person that precluded cross-questioning. For, when he told me this dreadful news his secretary was there and I could not even take his hand. But that was perhaps what he wanted. "White hands cling to the bridle-rein: Red lips tarnish the scabbarded steel. . . ." We rolled along the twisted road from Chi' to Selsey, to the village that was trying to get rid of him because he was a German, and he was carrying the King's Commission in his pocket!

George, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond

*the Sea, King . . . Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India
 . . . To our Trusty and well-beloved Ford Madox Hueffer,
 Greeting. . . .*

*Given at Our Court of St. James in the Fourth Year of
 Our Reign.*

Joseph Conrad wrote to Joseph Leopold to wish him luck, full of fellow-feeling as another Englishman who was going to devote his own son. "*Mon cher . . .*" "everybody who knows you" will appreciate "the inner value of your action." *Ces gens de métier* understand each other. And Joseph Conrad loved Joseph Leopold. He understood what an enormous change the step his friend had taken must entail on his mental habits. That was how he put it, and it was easy for me to see that he thought Joseph Leopold's writing days were over. I thought so too, and that he had done his fair war-toll for forty-two—two propaganda books in six months. I had cried for three days, and I think, I hope, that this theory of mine dictated my tears . . . and my shameful contumacy. I could hardly bear even to help to make arrangements, but I did write to Conrad to ask him if he knew anything about some field-glasses that Joseph Leopold remembered "knocking about at the Pent Farm."

Yes, Conrad remembered them, but age, and some help from Jackolo, had long since "resolved them into their primitive elements." And they wouldn't have been good enough. They were his watch-keeping glasses, just sufficient to pick up a ship's lights at night. Joseph Leopold would want something that would be more efficient. Conrad's boy had left to join the Grove Park Dépôt of the A.S.C., and his father had never seen him look so happy. If anyone ever saw the portal of the seventh heaven open on this earth it was that boy, he said, and added that he shuddered at the recollection. In about a fortnight young Borys found himself attached to a heavy Howitzer, so his next letter was positively incoherent with joy.

They all were—the "boys"—dash it! Borys, seventeen, Joseph Leopold, forty-two—both as happy as kings.

Mr. Conrad sent me *Victory*, announcing that it was doing well.

Positively he didn't care a damn whether it did or not. He had been too long "at the game" (of letters), and was heartily sick of it. Did I remember that phrase out of *Salamambo* about Mathô, when she had tortured him? "*Et le malheureux marchait toujours.*" He would write till he died.

He did, and I think that Joseph Leopold, who began so many tales and stories with him, ought to have finished the one he left. No one else would know by instinct and habit how he had wanted it to end.

Conrad accepted, with the desire that he might never be called upon to exercise it, the trust that Joseph Leopold intended to repose in him—that of carrying out his last wishes. He was honoured, though he thought that "Violet by herself," would be eminently fit for the charge Joseph Leopold wished to entrust to both. And he was going soon to ask me for "a good slice of afternoon," and hoped that I was as well as it is possible to be when one's world is heaving under one's feet, causing a sort of "moral sea-sickness."

Those slices of afternoon were memorable because it showed me that the "moral sea-sickness" had produced some such striking *revirement* of judgement and theory as when the eyes of a man, under strong or physical emotional stress, seem to turn in their sockets. The literary eyes of Conrad were looking towards idealism. To make anything of it "in our sense," his, Joseph Leopold's and mine—a flattering conjunction!—he fancied that it was nowadays necessary to fling the very last dregs of realism overboard. Nothing "forced" would do. He admitted the inclusions of here and there a technical phrase, than which there is "nothing more suggestive."

From Joseph Leopold, a simple soldier, training at Tenby, a veritable babe in arms, swimming with his wrist-watch on and other childishnesses, went a letter which pleased the older man mightily. He told me that he was touched to see that Joseph Leopold did not discard their common past. He admitted that these old days may have not been very good days, as they should have been. "But to me, my dear, they are a very precious possession." In fact, he had nothing else that he could call his own. Had

Joseph Leopold put them aside in his "more fortunate Present" his friend would have felt distinctly the poorer for it.

Joseph Leopold's fortunate Present! Route marches, urgent drills, getting up at six, training for the chance of being killed! It was the war-fever, and all men of good will, even authors, shared it. Conrad never rested till he got a war job of his own, not unattended with danger.

I am sure that, not only Mrs. Conrad, but every woman in our position felt as I did about her man. Authors and artists, leading a more or less sedentary life, whose sport has been literature and its arena the study, submitted to these healthy severities, are less likely to get through than a man who has led the pleasantly hardening life of the average Englishman of no clerical occupation. So some English women went through a hundred petty anxieties, debasing and demoralising enough. . . . One followed the regiment *pour le bon motif*, one did one's best to get off with the colonel, *pour le bon motif* too, one practised the arts that occur to all women who don't want their beloved sent off on active service.

But of course it had to be. Colonels, however devoted, did not consider the matter at all on their lines. And there were panaceas, extra leaves . . . and then we would go down to, say, Easton Glebe and join the famous hockey parties there and I would watch a Cabinet Minister "taking tosses" and Joseph Leopold landing Miss Violette Selfridge, as she was then, one on the chest with his hockey stick. He prostrated himself with apologies, of course, and wrote to enquire and his letter was answered fully from Berlin, where this young lady and her mother were spending the week-end. And there was play-acting in Dunmow barn and the scions of the Chatelaine of Easton and Miss Ellen Terry did their little best to amuse the soldiers—Lady Warwick's Mercy playing Cinderella to the Prince of Miss Ellen Terry's grandchild, Denis, while "Pip" Wells was got up as heavy father to the two wicked sisters. I sat between the two parents. The contrast between the child of nature and the sophisticated woman of fashion, the social reformer and the actress, the caparisoned graces and dignity of the one, the restlessness and the untutored grey hair of the other kept

me amused the whole evening. I don't know about the soldiers. . . .

Lady Warwick had given up her house to the — Regiment and had retreated with her pet monkeys and her guests to the lodge, or laundry, or whatever it was in the grounds. It was small, so she made a dining-room in a tent. At one lunch to which the H. G.'s took me I sat between H. G. and Mrs. Langtry. The Lily seemed very intelligent. She was on the eve of a campaign in America and entertained us with cynical criticism of the harmful but necessary agent. And she contrived to look so entrancing, so beautiful, on eyes and voice alone! *Ces appas* by themselves constituted a quite devastating charm. She is easily the most beautiful woman of her time. A third beauty, Ellen Terry, was staying there too but her eyes were so bad that day that she was unable to face the light and lay inside in a darkened room.

After lunch the Lily took me a walk, ostensibly to see the house where she had stayed in the old days, but really to plague the old colonels who had brought their parrots in cages out for the benefit of the sun and were sitting in front of the French windows reading their papers. . . .

After we had walked about in front of them among the eschocholtzia beds and driven them all to fold up their *Times* and take refuge inside she said, "Now, let's go back." It was an adorable piece of mischief.

And, at night, we danced in H. G.'s barn with all sorts of wonderful people practising efficiently a job "they did not understand," lady 'bus drivers, Waacs, Doctor Leahy, the healer by suggestion, to whom I went later in Weymouth Street for ghostly physical comfort—I do not really know what the system is called.

"Sit easily . . . look at my ring . . . you now close your eyes . . . don't squeeze them . . . naturally . . . you *can't* open them!" And one knew one could open them but felt one would not like to be so rude as to do it and hurt the poor doctor's feelings. I told him so and he said, "You can't open them really, but you choose to put it down to politeness."

Young Mr. Wells really was a bit of a magician. He took me

walks and walks and such was his masterly exposition of the problem that, for a matter of sixty seconds, sitting by and hanging over the tinkly stream, he made me understand the Fourth Dimension. Here is my horoscope cast by this clever boy.

Mrs. Hueffer's Horoscope, by "Pip."

She has moderate vitality, strong will power, and fair judgement. She has an emotional nature, and is generous and affectionate. Is to a certain extent under the influence of Fortune. Is just a trifle nervous, and not very ambitious, and would not be very brilliant at necromancy, alchemy or other branches of Occult Science. She has a strong faculty for immediate apprehension, or intuition, and is very sentimental. She has moderate affection for the opposite sex. Her hand exhibits a large number of bad signs. She is under the influence of the Sun, Venus and Jupiter, of which the former is probably the stronger. These planets make her good looking and loving, and give her a harmonious temperament and a bright disposition. She will have slight pecuniary losses, but will receive an inheritance. She will have slight tendency towards diseases of the brain, and will suffer a little trouble from revolutionary spirits among the domestic servants. If she takes to keeping cows she will be successful. She will make a fortunate marriage. She is religious and studious, and will have fortune and success in almost any undertaking. She will have faithful friends and many of them, and honours will be showered upon her.

Notice—Prophecies as to the future mean between twenty-one years and death. Do not distort the truth, but adhere strictly to my code.

(Signed) "PIP" WELLS.

And we used to go down to Leigh-on-Sea to stay with Rebecca West and sit by the ruins of the old feudal castle there and muse on the more modern methods of getting what one wanted and keeping it, with which we were being so constantly and sadly acquainted. Not very far away we saw the smoke of Silver Town

and Vickers' great manufactory of the engines of death. Canvey Marsh lay at our feet, tenanted by a few foreign families who have lived there since mediæval times. More bombs were dropped in this area than anywhere else because of the Vickers' objective, and also because Southend got the whole and the freshest force of the Zeppelins—the ones that were stopped by our barrage, artlessly shed their bombs on an unimportant area and got back again without attempting London. Once Queen Victoria—that was what Rebecca called her historical-looking cook—stalked into the dining-room and announced, "I think I ought to tell you, Miss West, that there are six Zeppelins now advancing over the garden." That was a very bad raid. The poor cat got out in the flurry and was found later lying in the gutter of the chief street of Leigh, dying, with a piece of shell in its side.

Doctor Leahy would not let me carry tray or stoop. . . . No Red Cross or Canteens for me. I was shamed among literary women. Jane was making swabs at the Royal Academy. Stella was at Victoria Station. Even poor Rebecca did War Work . . . everyone. As for my men friends, they were all off on the other side. Even Wyndham Lewis trimmed his abundant locks and looked after a gun, his cherubic head looking like that of a bambino by Murillo. I imagine that, as soon as this young gentleman got among the shafts and shell cases . . . the resulting gore and chunks of bleeding flesh—he must have felt quite at home and rendered his military sticks and wooden Generals walking about like animated pit-props, lovingly. In manholes and dugouts, listening to the thunder of the trumpets of the night, he must have remembered the Venusberg of the charming sorceress, Madame Strindberg. For the Cabaret Club, her home, which she had decorated, was covered with Bismarckian images, severings, disembowellings, mixed pell-mell with the iron shards that did it, splashed with the pale blood of exhausted heroes . . . men who, agreeably to the precept of the Great Chancellor, had pretty nearly nothing left them but their eyes to weep with.

Well, the War fever which fostered and indulged this particular art manifestation seems also to have killed it. But, while the fight was on, the Vorticist picture over my mantelpiece—voted so

becoming to me, my desperate eyes and iron profile—was, I think, almost soothing to the sort of guests I had during those six years. . . . All through that time soldiers came to meals and drinks and unbuckled their Sam Brownes and sat in arm-chairs, gazing up at the picture, as it were striving to acquire a hair of the dog that had bitten them, to recapture a fainter vision—oh, much fainter!—of the bloody colours that habitually met their eyes, of the continual upward expectoration of obuses and the burstings of the shards and dust of death. Perhaps it was a sight for “sair een,” this absence of teasing representation, a luxury to see red without blood and apprehend noise with no sinister meaning.

The way these authors came up to time! Henry James, gouty, dyspeptic, short-sighted, could do nothing—but he did that magnificently! He had moved into a flat in Chelsea, started a brougham, and entertained the British Army in the widest sense of the word. Drawing-rooms interested him no longer. Peggy, a niece, was living somewhere round about, the daughter of his brother William, author of one of the most widely interesting, most psychological of books, the material of half a dozen novels buried in accounts of the varieties of religious “dopes”—for so he seems to me to envisage them, but most reverently. His brother, Henry, had never talked religion; he now talked Army, thought Army, and died Army—quite suddenly!

No one expected it. Like little Miles, I think the great man’s heart broke because of another apparent turpitude—because America was so slow coming in.

“He is dying, madam!” the porter at 21 Carlyle Mansions said to me one evening when I went there, not expecting to see him, but to enquire after a slight cold that had been announced. “A little set-back,” said the lady of next door, who came down the stairs from his flat and asked me to go in to tea with her. There was no need for me to ring, for she had been right into the flat and had “seen Peggy.” He *was* ill, indeed, but that very morning the doctor had given them all fresh hopes. . . .

And yet, before the morning, I had lost my “trusty, rusty Henry James,”

In England there was surely more joy when Henry James came over than if even President Wilson himself had repented. By the time Henry died we had got used to thinking that was impossible, and doubtless Henry was no more optimistic than the nation to which he now belonged. I had asked him, using the pauses to which he had, as it were, trained me:

"Why, Mr. James, precisely, did you do it?"

He answered, "My dear Purple Patch, chiefly because I wanted to be able to say *We*—with a capital—when I talked about an Advance."

I suppose that, during those last few months, he said *We* so hard, took the affairs of *Us* so much to heart, that it gave him the stroke from which he died. Paralysed he was, all up that side that leaves the brain comparatively free.

Henry James could not legally belong to two nations at once, like Joseph Leopold, but I was never allowed to forget that *We* included the French. I shall never forget his rage when I told him of how Mrs. Fisher (Adrienne Dayrolles), who had played for him in *Guy Domville*, had been lunching with some ladies of the English upper classes who were doing all sorts of war work, and doing it very nicely, too. They were bragging of "our men" at Ypres, justly enough, but one of them, less British than the others, had sufficient detachment to observe the angry dismay of a Frenchwoman whose countrymen were being quite unconsciously left out of this pæan. With the high courtesy of her race, and it is to be feared some of its stupidity, she put in a word for Mrs. Fisher's benefit, saying, with a note of flippant patronage, "And the *French* did very well, *too*!"

He boiled. I boiled. We boiled together. That kind of thing happened too often, and Henry James's sympathies, if anything, were rather more with the country that had produced Flaubert, the original seeker of *le mot juste*, than now old-fashioned slogan. The war has killed *le mot juste*. But the uses of his sympathy naturally fell to the country of his adoption—"Anything I can do, anything I can write!" No war appeal went unregarded; he even allowed himself to be interviewed. The chaste Henry! He ceased to "chaperon" himself. Words were put into his mouth—

ineptitudes! Greater love hath no man than he lay down his *style* for his friend. He was so willing to help that he was eager to be comprehended of the people.

Miss Winifred Stephens asked him to write an article for the *Book of France* and Madame Duclaux would translate it. It would appear here in English, too. He said to me, shyly:

"I want you to let me read you something I have written. Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me if I am comprehensible? They tell me"—he turned his head away—"that I am obscure. . . ."

A pause. He was preparing apologies . . . for the immense compliment he was going to pay me . . . sweetly clumsy: "You must not think that I am preparing to experiment on a vile body . . . yours . . . I just remembered that you were one of my oldest friends."

He read . . . standing . . . walking up and down in the front part of the room a long way from where I sat. But I heard. His voice, strong, resonant—the wonderful voice that old invalid men can muster when put to it—trembled, not from feebleness, but from emotion. Emotion, in Henry James! It was all perfectly clear, and of a poignancy! That was because he was in love with his subject. France, *la belle France* . . . intensely feminine, a bit of a cat, as I always see her. She stood there personified. No real woman could have resisted a real lover pleading in such a voice as that for *le don de l'amoureuse Merci*. Listening, I was stimulated to actual impertinence, it seemed to me ten minutes afterwards. But he was not angry; he knew that his reading had provoked the boldness that had borne me on the wave of enthusiasm which must earn me my forgiveness. It was an old man's slinky triumph. One for me, too, for twice this day I had succeeded in making Henry shy.

I said, "Mr. James! . . . I did not know you could be so—*passionate!*" I had sought and found *le mot juste*.

He turned and glared a little . . . a frown that was really a smile . . . he was gratified at the tremendous effect he had produced on a woman he always persisted in calling a frivolous *mondaine*. He walked towards a bookcase at the other end of the

room to give himself a countenance . . . and time. . . . He also had to find *le mot juste*!

He found it. He turned on me an eye, *narquois*, reflective, stork-like, a little devilish, calmly wise—the Henry James eye, in fact—and, with a little pompous laugh . . . the male warding off any attack that the persevering female might possibly be contemplating against his supreme bachelordom:

“Ah, madam, you must not forget that in this article I am addressing—not a Woman, but a Nation!”

Of course, he had gout now, like any good old English gentleman. Sometimes when I went to see him he would have his foot—both feet—swathed in linen bandages, laid out helplessly on a chair in front of him—“My old pain in possession”—very much annoyed if I dropped my glove or something that, however near his chair, he could not pick up for me. He stooped for things in excess—embarrassingly—and I have known such a *contretemps* cloud a whole afternoon. He would be a little untidy, perhaps, dressing-gown unequally disposed over night-gear, looking what he was—a thoroughly ugly man, with eyes dull, dyspeptic and inward, flat and deep set, like landlocked bays, gloomy, relieved at times by the harbour-lights of humour—a stony twinkle of innocent malice. He was all good—*herzen's gut*, as poor little Elizabeth Schultz used to say of the editor.

But, well or ill, it was understood that we talked in these days of war and nothing but war. There was to be no resumption of the Society gossip in which he used to delight. It was what one had gathered about Zeppelin defences while staying at an anti-aircraft station at Shingle Street, on the east coast, or whether one thought the recruiting good at Cardiff or at Redcar, where one would have lived for a month or two. Were the streets nicely full of khaki? Had I really seen a ten-shilling piece in that remote corner of Wales? Several! And what did the many men I must have met tell me about their respective experiences, and could I bring Mr. Stacke, the wounded officer of my acquaintance to see him who, after the battle of the Marne, riding into Paris, had made a *détour* to see the Château de Pierrefonds? And he would

wear him next his heart, for he loved to think of an officer as a Bayard who had not altogether lost his love of the arts. Rupert Brooke, a little wounded but able to come to lunch, he cherished like a son. I remember seeing his hand laid on the knee of the young soldier-poet like a benediction. We would drive him home after lunch in the carriage. He must be petted . . . must not walk, even if he could. . . .

He would never speak of Rupert Brooke after he had died.

He sometimes, but not often, spoke to me of Conrad who had sent *his* son and had so far got him safe, but never knew whether he was allowed to keep him—until the end.

Conrad got very low in hope towards the end. We were all of us, gentle and simple, writers and readers, under the flail, winnowed out to the death. Conrad, a *grincheur*, seemed more beaten than the rest.

These were the little old bitter speeches that fear and waiting forced from him:

"*Oui, mon cher*. . . . Our world of fifteen years ago is going to pieces, and what will come in its place God knows, but, I imagine, doesn't care. . . .

"Still, what I have said was the only immortal line in our *Romance*: 'Excellency, a few goats survive. . . .'

"Esoteric, sublime, profound, and comic, it still survives!"

And of the far-flung battle front of the *English Review*, its authors, backers and helpers, some survive and Some Do Not. My own purely personal loss was René Byles!—Joseph Leopold's too, for no man ever had a more faithful, conscientious friend. See his last letter to me from the Hydro at Richmond where, Conservative in all things, he went to die in the same room where his father had died before him.

But not of the same disease—surely a very modern one. Pernicious Anæmia. Uncharted . . . supposed to be incurable. . . .

The letter, poignant enough, is only just coherent . . . weak jets from the sluggish stream of his pale blood as it meandered through his frame—seemingly made of sticks, like a derelict um-

brella—reaching hardly to his finger-tips, then only to his wrist . . . then his elbows . . . every day receding further from his extremities. The White Death!

“Have I really been so good a friend to you? God knows. No woman needed one more and yet, half the time, my eyes were closed, my hands tied. . . .”

It is a battle of corpuscles . . . the red ones faint and go—the white ones win. Queer, mediæval-seeming experiments were resorted to. . . .

“On Saturday the doctors brought down a hefty gentleman from London and robbed him of a pint of blood which was later inserted into my veins. . . . I wish I could write . . . but, my dear, the dictated word is necessarily more or less formal, and I who am *at the best* formal, find it extremely difficult to be anything but business-like.”

That was his character—his character of a hero, pegged out on the Procrustean bed of a desk in the office of the *New Statesman*, writing always, with a card of sorts placed under the line to keep his letters straight. Emotion regulated by a ruler! It was only on his death bed that he felt able to write naturally—sentiments in pot-hooks. . . .

What a corrective of Joseph Leopold! Byles would have cut his hand off sooner than allow it to have Writer’s Cramp and use a secretary therefor. . . .

His death left me rudderless.

And, of the great ones, Conrad is gone and his widow is occupied in fending off the consequent fusillade of Lives, purporting to be written by those who “knew him best,” contradicting reports as to the intimacy of her distinguished husband with Joseph Leopold, who did succeed in getting a Life through . . . and now, I suppose, she will have to set about correcting me.

More than once, she is thankful to say, she was successful in “hoofing out Hueffer.” His proposed collaboration in *The Rescue* was “a sacrilege” which means were found to avert.

“After 1919 Conrad never sought a meeting.” Why, surely, to call at our house which he frequently did implied rather more effort for Conrad than to receive us at Ham Street.

James and Hudson went too, after the Peace. The last of those two great veterans, on his window-sill in Kilburn, had fed the birds that came to his hand from the heavy masking plane-trees that gave them shelter, out of his very substance, all through the war . . . but it was not the weakening of his rations that killed him. It was age. He was almost old enough to live on air. I think he very nearly did, if one listened to his housekeeper and heard what a very little food supported that fine, thin, shooting flame of energy. It must have been on air and the store of the mind-energy that he walked, that he boarded 'buses in motion, that he climbed the heights of Campden Hill to drink tea with me and the William Rothensteins and "Wyn" Hooper, who had known his wife and who was his kind and thoughtful executor. If he dined with me, he gaily and deliberately eked out a potato or so as against our cutlet or slice off the joint. Once he called at six and took me to a cinema. That night neither of us had any dinner. He did not seem to miss it. But he liked afternoon tea and cake best, and adored meeting people, whispering to me before they came that he could not stand it.

DEAR MR. EWART,—Will you come to-morrow to tea to meet the most charming man in the world? Not a party. He is too old and ill, but I know you will be gentle.

Poor Wilfred Ewart, whom Mr. Hudson particularly wanted to meet, died a few months afterwards in Mexico. He came, and he was gentle, for he, too, could not be otherwise. The war had maimed him and made him shy; he had the *mine effarée* of a faun. I remember the spare, angular young soldier sitting, his long neck like a pillar hardly moving in its still, high collar, his ear ragged, torn by a shot, standing away slightly from his cheek, beside the graceful, perfect old man of unknown age—except that his first communication about the birds he had seen at and around Buenos Ayres appears in the *Athenæum* round about 1870.

Yes, though I had known him since I was a child, and he was grey then, I supposed him not more than seventy at the very most, delicate and catch-coldy because of his foreign birth. I always

hastened to fence off any accidental revelation of its date, for who knows that he did not take an elfish pleasure in our ignorance of his secret. I was careful of him because I knew that he had a weak heart, and had recommended the young man to be soothing lest, in his ardour, he wearied or startled the dynamo that maintained the delicate spirit in its gracile sheath of flesh. Huddy was deceptive in that he was so anxious not to give trouble and so proud of this unknown weight of years gallantly and unobtrusively borne.

He would enter the room, full of people or otherwise, with the wearied grace of a D'Orsay, his small head slightly bowed, as if in deprecation of his tallness. He would bestow his long legs unobtrusively on a small gilt chair, or, if we were alone, on a *causeuse*, reclining where other men would have lolled. I would note the fine line from shoulder to knee and the steel-like limbs in their well-made clothes, for he cared for his appearance—went to a good tailor and chose his colours carefully. If I offered him a cushion, ten to one he would refuse it, but latterly, of his own motion, he would stretch himself out on the sofa and “put up his feet” like a lady.

In the autumn we would desert the Pre-Raphaelite drawing-room and go for greater warmth and comfort to the Vorticist study, where all the comfortable saddlebag chairs were. All styles, all rooms, all houses even, that were not a “lodge of boughs,” were alike to him. He had no “taste”—so called. We sat together on that welcome anomaly, the extra large Chesterfield sofa that came from my great-grandfather's rectory in Durham, and, with our backs turned—it was his only sign of misliking—to the cubes and fireworks, and towards the “Long Girl” of Albert Rutherston, which he rather liked, he would tell me in that tenuous, wistful voice of his, which now I know to have been the sign of age, of cats and birds, poets and publishers, nuns and flappers (“maidens” or “maidies” he would call them when they lived in the country!). He would declare pettishly that, since it had been announced that he was writing a book on animals, he was overwhelmed with letters from people about their so talented pets. He discussed his collected edition and the tiresome ways of rival publishers. He was proud of having prevented a beautiful young

Catholic nurse in Cornwall from taking the vows, and pleased, too, that the nuns—because of his charm, I very well suppose, had forgiven him.

He spoke very plainly to me about this girl's figure and her obvious and startling aptness for motherhood. I think Mr. Epstein must have second sight, for the author's description of this lady's contours tallied with the sculptor's presentment of the Spirit of Nature—whom the public still persist in calling Rima—which I went on a summer's day lately to the Park to see unveiled. I know that Rima, in *Green Mansions*, was very much under six feet, with a voice too large for her body. *Cela fait l'éloge* of Emily Hudson's husband, for she did sing divinely, and she was so short that a high footstool was always placed in front of her, and her hands were large, ugly, and ill-kept. Mr. Epstein has builded better than he knows.

He was writing a book about the senses. He thought there were really fifteen but had not settled on the number yet. Telepathy was to be one. And his pet Sense was Smell which, according to a German theory, plays a greater part in our lives than we imagine. "It constitutes a most curious subject on account of the survivals or reminders of its Great Past which come up in us."

I told him something that had always puzzled me, of my father's lack of one of the Big Five, as we understand them, the sense of Smell. He would sit contentedly all day on the roof of a pigstye, painting the most romantic view in the world. He had a compensating immunity, he never suffered from colds in the head. Mr. Hudson did not know that Sir Walter Scott and Wordsworth were both defective in this decayed and superseded sense. But he suggested that in all three cases the mucous membrane was thick and hard, perhaps dry, like the skin, and the olfactory nerves too dead in it to do their business. He slyly wondered why this idea of mine about Scott's lack of senses of Smell and Taste, affecting in some way the scope of his art, hadn't occurred to George Moore. We all knew that George has been so uncannily concerned with, and so convinced of the determining importance of the olfactory nerves all through his literary existence, and why hadn't he made use of it in his late jeering attack in the *Fortnightly* on the Wizard whose

poetry had begun to pall upon "Huddy" and his novels ceased to fascinate, in early youth.

Like many wilfully shy and withdrawn persons, he did not want for knowledge of the world, and once, when we watched a cinema reproduction of the orgiastic midnight life of New York, he was more up to the cynical implications of it all than I was. He did not mince words or fight shy of medical terms or disdain to go into the pros and cons of a recent ugly case with an absence of circumlocution and a directness of expression that seemed to disinfect them. As for the sexual aberrations of the classical world, I once asked him to tell me about the nightingale whose song I had heard in his own downland country, and realised only the pity and terror, none of the fabled beauty, of the cry. He told me very slowly, without emphasis—and it took a long time—a shocking, as it were police-court, story of savage lust and cruelty. I have never listened to the nightingale since; but when next comes to my ears the heart-rending wail that crept along the hedges at Marten I shall see the place of the slaying of Itylus, and hear, not the love-plaint, but the voice of the child's blood crying woe against the woman who, for the sake of revenge, slays joy—as women do.

As the winter drew on and his necessary flight to the Cornish Riviera loomed before him, he spoke to me of death and its imminence timidly, faintly, allusively, as I imagine primitive people and peasants may, fearful lest they who hold the shears may hear . . . take notice, perhaps, that such a one is overdue in the shades. . . . And one afternoon in his own house, the dark of an October day made darker by the dolorous planes, dusty with the summer's drift of the streets they mercifully masked, he sat beside me on the tattered, leather-covered sofa, under the tall bookcase, bowed a little, like some sad soul sitting on the Stygian brink, "waiting for waftage," and held out to me his soft, warm, life-giving hand, so little suggestive of Death of which, for once, he spoke freely.

That day the King of Shadows was in the wide, cavernous room . . . a new candour had come into being . . . fostered perhaps by some egotistic complaint of my own. He announced

defiantly, as he had announced many a time before, that he was engaged in tearing up manuscripts, burning naturalist's notes, commandeering his own letters from friends, "so as to leave not a scrap. . . ." His voice rose; he was asserting his right and will to destroy as he was to be destroyed. One of his scientific friends had put before him a ruthless theory of the non-survival of consciousness after death which I knew disturbed and convinced him. Since, so his friend told him, all ideas and associations are recorded on minute filaments of the brain substance, and since these mortal filaments decay, he could not believe that the register they hold, which is, in effect, consciousness, can survive. As well expect the manuscripts of the Four Courts to have remained after the place was burned down!

He sat with his head upon his hands; the sting of death was so sharp that no futile consolation could modify its poignancy. I despaired, even as he did, but I tried to instil the comfort of which I indeed could not avail myself.

"Don't talk to me. *I know. I know.* [You are young. . . ." I realised then that he must really be old to talk like that. "I am looking straight at death—down a funnel—that narrows—the end of it is closed. And I have nothing to do but die. . . ." The languid legs crossed and uncrossed. "I cannot, at my age, forget for a single moment. And I don't want to!" He said that quite querulously, and then sat up and smiled, as if to beg forgiveness for showing temper with me—and Death. He resumed, in a voice low, soft, changed from the voice of his rage, "The time will come . . . I shall not see the grass and the things moving up and down in it. And when *you* talk of being unhappy! . . ."

I asked him piteously if he was really sure that all was lost when we were dead, and he bade me, gently, read something he had written in his last book which he had sent me, and guessed that I had not read—*The Return of the Chiff-Chaff*. All he thought about Death was there; it was the nearest he could get to telling me what he felt. I *had* forgotten it . . . I floundered a little, but he did not notice. He was, for the moment, beyond literary politenesses; an animal trapped, with knowledge of its

doom; a child afraid of the oncoming dark; a grown man simply dreading "the night when no man can work."

The distress of eld was communicated to me, although I *was* younger. We sat still. The leaves of the plane-trees outside rustled, and the pigeons, near their hour of feeding from his hand, cooed sweetly. The handsome Scotch housekeeper like a Rossetti, with her wistful, primmed, yet curved and sensuous mouth, who was all the woman about the house for this lonely man and a couple of old maids in the flats above and below, came in and cleared away some of the rusty old keepsake albums, and the new smart gilt volumes from the centre table, and, shoving others on one side, spread a cloth worked in coloured crewels and set a tray on that to nestle uncomfortably among the literary wrack. "Well, come to tea," he said wearily, and he moved to the table, and I poured out the tea, which, I believe, he would rather have done, and we both ate large buns whose savage currantiness I did not appreciate but made a note to offer him the like next time he came to me instead of flimsy bread and butter, for tea was his last meal; and when we had eaten we went into a sort of a little box of a pantry to get the maize and lay it on the projecting tray on the sill which he had fashioned to support the food and the unwieldy grey birds that knew him, though, with me there, they would not come, but sat aloof and looked at us.

I liked best to get him to come to me, forth of the dreary domain where he stayed out of pride and loyalty to "Rima," the Voice in the Tree, who had lived there with him till hideous illness forced her from his side six years ago—the lady of *Green Mansions*. I had never seen her, but I had heard of her always as a tiny being heavy for her height, possessed of golden hair and a mighty voice, who, long since she had charmed him, had grown sullen and cantankerous; made pettish demands on his time and his patience, and kept his friends away from the house. Indeed, he once told me in a letter, deprecating my too sentimental view of the relations of man and woman, that he had not married his wife for love but for companionship. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." She lived away, and he was glad of it.

I have never found in all my friend's writings a line that leads

me to suppose that he ever entertained that exclusive emotion, that desperately passionate interest, with which modern men may regard modern women—modern love, which is, after all, an invention of the Minnesingers ratified by the Courts of Love when a knight's devotion was his constant moral wear, like his lady's glove on his *heaume*. He spoke of a woman's "passion" to me once, but it was only a spasm of humanitarianism evoked in the beautiful Lady Grey by the sight of an act of stupid cruelty. She noticed an ugly tramp picking a bird out of a hedge and putting it into his pocket. She rose from her seat. "Give that to me!" she said, and the hedge-thief, daunted by her splendid and "passionate" gesture, surrendered his prey and the lady lay in "Huddy's" heart for ever.

Once, surely—normally, simply, like the birds and beasts in their springtime—he sought a mate, and, even then, it was a spiritual one, that Voice in a tree. That was his romance, and the extinguishing of it and the Voice together his tragedy!

Before I went down to the country last August I gave him my address, saying that, if I did not hear from him soon—just a line—I should be anxious, and I am afraid that offended him a little and prevented him from writing. Aware of his wild susceptibility on the score of being looked after, I did not worry much, as I was coming home soon.

On the Friday morning I had come downstairs, faint with want of sleep, into the large, light library and glanced at the *Times*, telling my host that, in the watches of the night, I had had a presentiment that on opening the paper, I should see the announcement of my friend's death—as, of course, I should some day, for he was old—and in very large letters, for he was a great man.

The morning after that I awoke refreshed after sleeping well, and, after breakfast, opened the *Times* and read of the death of Dame Genevieve Ward, and lingered over the details of her life-history while, all the time, in the adjacent column, was the announcement I had dreaded to see. Only when I had done one column did the headline of the next strike me, and I saw that a greater than she had gone. He had died while I watched, sleepless,

the night before. I went to one of the tall windows and looked out on the placid Kentish scene, and made up my mind to look on his face once more and walk after him to the grave, wherever it was they chose to lay him. And all the rest of the day I was telephoning to find out where and when that was to take place. Between waiting for trunk calls and return telegrams I mused on those hours spent with him, and especially the last time that one never knows to be the last, or one would never have the heart to part.

We had been lunching at Whiteley's together, under the dome. He liked a table there—the pearly glass roof, that scintillated with flakes of light, implied sky, and the opposite of his home, with its black, smoke-stained ceiling, the tattered wallpaper, and picture-frames with all their gilding gone. We had a very bad luncheon which he enjoyed—spinach and cheese and coffee—and we talked languidly of Wagner. There was a shadow under the gleaming dome. He was dull and far away.

He put me into a 'bus. As we crossed the road, an access of the protective instinct came over me, which I showed and he lightly resented. While we waited for the 'bus he was telling me that he had just bought a coat-dress for a girl, and it had cost £2 10s. I fancy that was for the landlady's little daughter at Penzance. Then the 'bus drew up, and I got in and watched him, still nervous, out of the window between the people's heads, as he turned away and walked in the direction of Kilburn. He was agile and upright; only the other day Alice told me that, after lunch, her girls walked with him to the bottom of Sheffield Terrace, and, to go home, he had boarded No. 31 while it was in motion.

I got into London at midnight on Sunday, and, early next morning, I boarded No. 31. (How our little life is rounded with these 'buses!) I got down at Westbourne Park Station, turned some corners, and came to a row of gaunt and decaying stuccoed and Victorian houses, standing back, with what they call a garden, from a straw- and paper-bestrewn street. This was where he and his wife had lived in the tall house at the corner of another dreadful street bisecting it.

"Huddy" was his own landlord; I had been told that he owned

the whole row, but my impression is that only one house was his, which he had converted into three flats and basement for a housekeeper. For himself, he had retained the first floor; his tenants, he told me, were preferably ladies.

I looked in vain for the usual effect of white eyelids cast down, but not until I was quite near did I become aware that the usual sign of respect had been paid him, and that all the windows were blanks of dirty Union, dun-coloured like the walls. The door was open. The Scotch housekeeper with the Rossetti face was talking to "Ground Floor," a sad-faced old maid. "I was expecting you," she said. The old lady bundled away. My hands were full of sprigs of Banksia roses, which I had wrenched from the bush at my own door because he had admired it so often, standing there by the bell he had just rung, looking like a traveller from a distance, with a coat upon his arm, especially when it was warm weather. I had scratched my hand. I had been in such a hurry to get there before they fastened down the lid of the coffin, so as to look my last upon the most beautiful human being my eyes have ever rested upon.

His beauty—I use the word in the sense of that dominating, all-over excellence which may characterise all men and women so favoured of the gods—was implicit in the whole of his being. It was not determined to the head or face; to my mind his face was too small, too beak-like, too much refined to a point. If, as we have it, all men suggest likeness to some animal, one might figure him some bird pressing forward against a gale; his profile and his hair, even, had a wind-blown, backward sweep. It was not an "open" face, the gaze of it was, on the whole, too shrewd, too wilful and withdrawn. The eyes were bright and dark, the regard narrowed continually in a sort of wild, astute vigilance. The eyes had grown less bright, less vigilant, and the voice, always quiet and measured, in these last months thin and faint, sometimes querulous, as of a prophet ancient and disregarded, like Burne-Jones's Merlin in the hawthorn brake. . . .

The housekeeper said No! he was screwed down already, and was to be "took" by road to-morrow at nine to Broadwater Cemetery,

where his wife was buried. There was no need to go up, so we stood on the rough, hairy mat, interrupted by tradesmen, peered at by the disgracious old tenants of his choice who made a business of crossing and recrossing the dull hall, made gay by my flaring red roses. Behind us, at the top of the kitchen stairs gaping black, little red-cheeked Rossetti children in cleanish pinafores poked their heads up and asked their mother what they should do about this and that. . . .

He had been unwell since Monday, with the indigestion high up. He kept touching his chest, saying that he could not sleep because of the oppression. . . . He was sure that, if he could only get some sleep, he would be all right again, and he determined to eat nothing solid. She got a doctor in who had agreed with him, so he had just Bovril and some weak tea. I thought, and said, that perhaps the doctor meant *made* beef-tea and nourishing cocoa. "Yes," said the housekeeper, "I expect the doctor did, but he would not have things made on purpose for him, nor yet a nurse." He was very fond of tea, and used to make it in the little pantry for himself as early as five in the morning when he had not slept, and at all sorts of queer hours.

These independent arrangements, these matutinal roving, constituted, I think, one at least of the reasons why he would not come and stop with me, as I pressed him to do when he complained that his bones ached so that he could not sleep, having confidence in my own soft mattresses. But he said gently, "My dear, I don't want to come and die in your house!" The image evoked was like a sudden jab at one's heart, and made one answer brusquely, "I shouldn't mind." Once, when his need was very sore—the housekeeper was going away for a fortnight's much-needed holiday—he did promise as he saw me to the corner. He was to come and stay the very next night. I shouted from the step of No. 31 to him, standing bareheaded among the paper strewing and detritus of suburban life which banked the gutter: "Now mind, I expect you!" But I felt he would never come.

The indigestion couldn't be stirred; the oppression continued, and he lay there sleepless, alone. The housekeeper went up as often as she could. He spoke, she said, often of Alice and of me,

admitting it was a bad job we were both away and couldn't come and talk to him, but he would not have us sent for—"No, no!" in his weak, thread-like voice. On Thursday morning his best friend came to him, the man who had given him to us all for ten years longer, making him take digitalis for his weak heart, but had not dared to bring in a nurse lest he should kill his dear by over-exciting him; but he insisted on bringing in a specialist. The prescription of that gentleman was not to hand till midnight—"and then we had to go for it all the way to Whiteley's!" Whiteley's is not very far. Oh, that I had been there to use my legs in his service!

At midnight she left him, charging him on no account to get up, for she would look in herself at five o'clock and make his tea. She did so. It was dawn when she saw him again, lying awake but uncomplaining, rather more cheerful. He said that he felt drowsy, and, after he had had his tea, he settled himself confidently to go to sleep. She thought him a bit dazed and queerish, but that was partly because, before she left the room again, he shook hands with her, saying, "Good-bye!" instead of "Good-night!" But, as she afterwards reflected, the night was by that time well over, and he might have thought of that. . . .

At eight she sent the little Rossetti girl up to his room to call him, who returned saying that he was asleep. So she let him "lie" a little longer—about half an hour—and then sent the child again, who returned with the same answer, adding that she had touched the gentleman and he did not wake. Then the sweet woman, full of fears, hurried upstairs, and found him lying on his side—mercifully; for then, she said, the chance was he would not have had ill dreams. He was quite warm—not long dead. He did not get cold till midday, she said, but was still warm in the small of his back. . . . And his face was beautiful . . . but a few hours later* so altered that she could not bear to look at it.

I said that I *must* go up. There was no chance of seeing him. I knew the lid was screwed down; but I believe, confused, obfuscated by sudden grief, I thought I *should* see him, for the first thing I did on going into the room was to look at the wide bed on which the sheet was untidily pulled up, expecting to see the outline of a form beneath it. And I said, "But where is he?" like

Mary Magdalene, and she pointed to the coffin, which I had overlooked, drawn up alongside of the bed like a sort of *annexe*. It was of light and smooth yellow wood, glistening with brass clamps and drop-handles. There were some white flowers near the name-plate, and I laid my roses beside them; it seemed to me now silly and useless, but I had brought them for that purpose. Then I stood and stared all round that long, ugly room into which he had once brought me to show me the Chinese toilet service he wanted me to have—afterwards. It was so large and unwieldy that he only used the soap dish and toothbrush tray of one set, and he had three. The spare ewers and basins were in the drawing-room on top of a high Chippendale bookcase, and I was appalled to see him stand, both hands raised, on the tippy back of the sofa in front of it to reach them down, for I knew he had a heart. The jugs, with long, narrow necks like vases, embossed with birds and flowers in green and red and yellow, were heavy. I didn't know what ware, nor did he. He had said he wanted to sell two sets out of the three, and I told him I would like to buy one—for ten pounds say? He had forgotten what he had said about giving it me. He hesitated, saying, "I don't know the value . . . and . . . it might be *more* than ten pounds?" So the bargain lapsed.

At the foot of the bed was a table covered with green baize and a writing-pad, with a pen lying near it, filled up to halfway down. Had he got out of bed to write in the night? We wondered. . . . Near the foot of the bed was an empty saucer. He had been feeding the cat, I suppose. . . .

We stood, the woman who had spoken with him last and I, talking out loud. "How can we?" I said, and, with a despairing gesture, she replied, "It doesn't matter." She was weeping, but, although she spoke of him with regard, it was not the familiar fondness that good, kind masters evoke in persons of her class. I imagine that her sentimentality was rebutted by her simplicity, his polite aloofness which was the meed of us all. He must have seemed to her "so different from most gentlemen she had done for," and, of course, she had not the intercourse with him through his writings which we had.

She spoke of his wife, quite six years away from this house, and, indeed, it was time she went! Her nerves were awful. Her ways—her hands—well! The Rossetti mouth stiffened in retrospective disgust. Her legs were so short that she always had to have a footstool. I knew that well enough. She wore ringlets. She did not like him away, and he never left her unless there was someone chartered to sit with her. I remember his visits to our house in those days, and how, at the stroke of six, Huddy would put down his cup or whatever he was holding and bolt back to her. I never dared offer to call; I was told that she would have been rude to me; and now, judging from this nice creature's unconsidered utterances, I realised that was very likely. He was "good with her"—what does not that phrase mean?—but, of course, it gave him nerves, too. . . .

Was he ever in danger of forgetting that this dwarfish, exacting creature had been, sometime, the songstress who sat in her bower in the tree-tops and charmed the young huntsman's soul out of his body with her singing? I do not think so. He drank his cups, and asked not that they should pass from him.

There was a dull crimson stain on the side of the covering sheet next the coffin. She saw my eyes fixed on it, and started talking of ugly things pertaining to the mortal body which lets us down, betrays us so in our hour of helplessness, forcing us to relinquish our carefully retained elegancies and decencies . . . she was willing to gratify the taste we all share for the macabre. But I would not let her do so, for the sake of love and remembrance and the cult of the vision I meant to retain. The dreadful antithesis was less plain to her than me. That this pale Exquisite, whose mortal dross should surely have been transmuted quickly into the pale dews of spirit—that this Incorruptible must first don Corruption and, in making his toilet for the grave, bleed red blood like a soldier on the battlefield! I thought that I, and how much more he, would have preferred to shield the mortal lapse in some dark, cold cave, or, lying in state on a mountain peak, have the eagles pick his brains as white as those of a harmless sheep on Helvellyn. For such a one to perish in the wrack of a "mouldering lodge" in North London! , , ,

It was his own choice, yet, from that moment, everywhere, the suggestion of decay. In the passage, where the oilcloth had "perished" in parti-coloured scabs; in the drawing-room, where, from the blotched and bleared red sofas and *bergères*, the leather was peeling off, hanging in pendent flaps like the disgusting wattles round the neck of a vulture. Not here! Oh, not here! Better a shepherd's hut in Marten or on Yarmbury Camp, near Wylye, failing a peak in the Andes.

"Victoria, August 22nd, 11 o'clock."

"Change at Brighton! Front part of the train." There were not more than five or six people walking up and down the platform whom I singled out as interested in this direction—two old men, full of years and dignity, one of the type of the foxy statesmen of the Elizabethan age, the other eager, yet tired-looking; another, the chief executor who had made all the arrangements, carrying a carton of flowers, rallying us all, seeking to cover his grief with an attempt at Mark Tapleyism for which we were all of us, perhaps, obliged to him. There was a distinguished literary critic and a literary doctor risen very obviously from a sick-bed to follow his lifelong friend on this last lap. Presently Alice touched me on the shoulder, and we, the only two women in the convoy, stayed with each other all the time. At South Kensington I had missed a train to get out and buy a pocket-handkerchief, though resolved not to "break down." To the same end Alice had brought none at all.

The country flashed by us. We duly changed at Brighton and went on to Worthing. From the windows of the train, as we crossed the Arun, I saw the reaches of sunburned, shining sand, the tips of the masts of ships, and inlet bays of sea between the scattered chalets of Shoreham. There flowed in to us the smell of the sea, of tar, and other tokens of man's daily occupation, repugnant enough to mourners who are absenting themselves from their own full lives awhile that they may solemnly accompany a fallen comrade part of the way to the shades.

At Worthing we had an hour to wait before the carriages that were to take us to the cemetery would draw up outside the station,

so we sat down, all of us, at a marble-topped table in the refreshment room and fed like a horse that unconcernedly crops the grass by the side of a dead fellow, but shamefacedly, being human. *I* think it was more what *he* would have wished. He was too real for sentiment.

The publishers began to discuss the literary reputation of their late client and the proposed Collected Edition. I was glad they had the grace to leave money out of the discussion. The red-checked, white-bearded one intimated politely that this reputation had been all owing to a confrère, present, who disclaimed the honour, and gave it away to a third, absent. Alice was disgusted; but to me, for whom the Work was the Life, this conversation was not so much out of place. Often and often Mr. Hudson and I had discussed this Collected Edition; the claims, pegged out, of different publishers were the plague of his life. In the same breath he would say that he wanted no memoirs written, no serving up of note-books *à la Butler*. . . . There was talk now of a forgotten novel, published in his youth, of which I had never heard him speak. It was not up to the level of *Green Mansions*, but had "very fine passages. . . ." Someone said he "would not have wished it. . . ."

But have not the generations to come a right to the royal crumbs from our life's table, and must posterity be deprived of these portions of performance not equal to the masterpieces of a great man, but holding "fine passages"? And shall the amiable whim, praiseworthy in itself, of a modest genius be set against the delight of future generations?

The carriage stopped against some iron railings, in front of a stone gate-house through whose archway we got a glimpse of a sunlit, flower-bedight prairie. On the platform of sullen macadam a white-banded, black-gloved clergyman was standing beside the box that was raised on a hand-cart. Borne by grunting bearers, it followed us into the tiny chapel, where, for half an hour, we listened to St. Paul's puzzling pronouncements delivered in tones that suggested the reader's disclaimer of any possible interpretation. When we came out it appeared to be a question of who

was to walk first after the coffin. A short lady, in dull, complete black, was mentioning with tearful urgency her name and status. For six years she had "been with" the wife of the deceased, and therefore desired to walk first. . . . But the chief mourner of us all, walking alone and quickly with his bunch of heather, was long ahead of us—meant to be. Alice and I passed down the path bordered by headstones, while the insistent lady in black walked alone behind.

I felt her mute, inward clamour in my back and with Alice's permission, invited her to walk between us. This earned us a sad and backward glance from Mr. Hudson's friend, for she now talked loudly about her late patient. She had often seen the husband—oh, yes, he used to come down to Worthing sometimes and push his wife about along the front in a bath-chair. She regretted that he had not been down once since her funeral, so had not seen how the daisies were growing on the double grave with the headstone equally divided between. He had purchased the plot of ground, promising to lie beside her and put his name under hers. "She was always ill, and couldn't even see to read when I came to her. . . . Over eighteen months of it! . . . She said many a time, 'I am *so* glad I got a *lady* to look after me!'" . . . and so on and so on. Behind us was the Rossetti housekeeper, silent enough, her red mouth pinched with weeping and her young husband bearing a sheaf of flowers in tissue paper.

The grave was close to an ash-tree, whose coarse, tough roots, truncated by the digger's spade, stuck out like a man's six days' beard from the loamy walls of the grave, like yellow panels.

The sun shone keen, the wind rustled in the ash-keys. The box was lowered into the hole with bands coloured like the rejected soil heaped halfway up the trunk of the tree. The feet of the men pashed the pink and white daisies on the other neat plot. Well, they would spring again! The young clergyman read the remainder of the service from his prayer-book, propped before him, his soft hat used as a lectern. Taken so, it was not very moving, and no one broke down. He said "*Earth to earth*" so quickly that most of us lost the phrase of phrases. It was as well for our self-control. His assistant did not miss his cue, but, pick-

ing from the handy heap of soil behind him the necessary grains of earth, threw them. They did not rattle, being clayey, and, when he had performed his task, he dusted his palms together with a gesture of disgust, as a white-handed, amateur gardener might have done.

The woman who had "been with" the dead man's wife shouted: "Now she's happy! At last! She's got him to herself!"

Afterwards, the kind executor showed me how to look on it all *à la Hudson*. "Yes, poor thing!" he said. "It was her hour. Her one chance in her dull life of expressing herself—of being before the public. *He* wouldn't have stopped her!"

No one else said anything. No one cried, but one mourner who, after throwing sprigs of heather down and giving us some to throw too, walked away, stumbling over the graves, his bowed head shaking with sobs. The vicar, after picking me out absently to shake hands with, departed, and the local reporters pattered about, scrutinising names on the wreaths and asking questions of anyone who would answer. Some of the mourners, informed that the grave of Richard Jeffries, another great earth-lover, was only five minutes' walk away, went to look at it. A few of us stood there, hesitating, not liking to leave him. . . .

Mourners, left standing upright beside a fallen comrade, are apt to make elision of those days before the burying, when their beloved has lain prone and already solitary in a darkened room under a drawn sheet. We insist on thinking of him as we last saw him, erect under a roof that is waterproof, with a fire to keep him warm; or, sturdy, in the street, holding an umbrella, perhaps, to shield him from the rain. We may have been "sitting" with him to prevent him feeling solitary, but now:

. . . in the colde Grave,
Alone, withouten any company,

we leave him. We are of our nature, ruthless—of our civilisation, grown utilitarian; we have the heart—because of a certain chemical change, gradual, hardly to be detected at the beginning, except by experts—to consign this beloved brother of ours who has, peradventure, only just left our table, our fireside, to lie in a cold

ditch six feet long by three feet wide or so, to spend his first night, perhaps, alone under the stars or the rain.

In his own words—and capitals—set down in the little article of faith—of which he spoke to me, William Henry Hudson had suffered “The Monstrous Betrayal.” The Power he worshipped but did not trust had destroyed him, willy-nilly. And I must return home, and quietly, within doors, warm and cherished, read again with reverence *The Return of the Chiff-Chaff*, that trivial incident wherein his philosophy is embodied, and learn from him the grudging but undistinguishing submission of all natural things to natural law that he practised who preached.

ENVOI

ENVOI

In *The Good Soldier*, which was to have been called *The Saddest Story*—a title turned down by John Lane because of the obvious cacophony—there is a curiously anticipatory Dedication to V. H.

"And then we shall come back to the fireside with just a touch of a sigh because we are not in that Provence where even the saddest of stories are gay." Are they . . . over there in France where Joseph Leopold still *fait école*? He cannot help it.

And I sit by the fire in England, under the fearsome masterpiece of Wyndham Lewis that becomes me so, with Mary finer, stouter, and Maleine, a worker, with small, precise, red-tipped mouth no longer torture and generous; her hair not any more toppling but bobbed, of course, and with a great, grown-up son to protect her. While far away in Sussex:

By the broken silver of the English Channel
Over the dreary beaches mantled with ancient foam
Like shrunken flannel
The aged moon watches alone. . . .

And Joseph Leopold wanders, wanders, among the *fleurs de luce* of the Castle of Beaucaire with another, hardier, sturdier Egeria, or sits

In the cool of even
In front of a café in Heaven.

For indeed, "God is a good Man, God is a kind Man . . . and gives to each man after his own heart. . . ."

And in the golden Book
Where the accounts of his estate are kept
All the round golden sovereigns of bliss
Known by poor lovers, married, or never yet married. . . .

All joy; all sweetness, each sweet sigh that's sighed . . .
Their accounts are kept
And carried
By the love of God to His own credit's side.

And, like Dowell in *The Good Soldier*, who married Florence, loved Leonora and nursetended The Girl in her madness, also for love—"Shuttlecocks!" she says continually, and little else; it might be supposed to signify that women—Egerias of all kinds—are but the playthings of geniuses who never can or will decide till they lie on their deathbeds which one "Has their whimsies and which has their heart."—Dowell does not know. "Not anything!"

But he still stands at the window, as he once wrote of Conrad;—"with the eyes that miss nothing. Nothing!" Unrelenting, unappeasable, unremitting rage of vision! . . . with still a reservation . . . I quote him:

"Nothing is more difficult, nothing is more terrible than to look facts in the face."

And there is the Russian proverb that gave him yet another title to a story:

"The heart of man is a Dark Forest because of the wolves there are in it."

And still he does not know. What a curtain!

APPENDICES

THE TIMES, February 7th, 1913.

KING'S BENCH DIVISION

ALLEGED LIBEL

Hueffer v. Illustrated Journals Ltd.

(Before Mr. Justice Avory and a Common Jury)

This was an action for libel. The defendants admitted publication, denied that the words referred to the plaintiff, and said they were fair comment.

Mr. Holman Gregory and Mr. S. L. Porter appeared for the plaintiff; and Mr. Wild, K.C., and Mr. Eustace Hills for the defendants.

Mr. Gregory said that the plaintiff was Mrs. Elsie Ford Madox Hueffer, and the defendants the proprietors of the *Throne* newspaper. The plaintiff was married to Mr. Joseph Leopold Ford Madox Hueffer, the well-known novelist, in 1894. They lived together for a considerable time, two daughters being born, one in 1897 and the other in 1900. Mr. Hueffer was a Roman Catholic,¹ and the two daughters were brought up in that faith. In 1909 Mr. Hueffer left the plaintiff for some reason, not her fault. Attempts were made to get him to come back, but failed. A petition was begun, and in January 1910 an order was made by the President of the Divorce Court that he should return to his wife.

¹ This is a more accurate version than N. S. Hawke's in 1925. See *Post*, page 9(?).

This order Mr. Hueffer did not obey. In April 1910 he was ordered to pay to the plaintiff as alimony £25 within three weeks, and £3 per week thereafter. He refused to obey this order on the ground that his wife was in a position to divorce him, but would not.

As a matter of fact, the plaintiff not only had very strong objection to divorce, but considered that it would not be right for her to prejudice the future of her daughters,² who belonged to a Church which did not recognise divorce unless the consent of the Pope had been obtained. Mr. Hueffer refused to pay the money and actually went to prison for not doing so. Negotiations through a Mr. Byles, who, he was instructed, was the manager of the *Throne*, were commenced with a view to an arrangement as to the support of the plaintiff and her daughters, which continued until May 1912. Mr. Hueffer was an Englishman, his father being a naturalised Englishman, and he himself having been born in England. But in 1911 he threatened to go to Germany, get naturalised, and then seek a divorce on the ground that the plaintiff had deserted him. He (counsel) did not think he had done so; no papers were ever served on the plaintiff, and enquiries had elicited no particulars of any divorce proceedings in Germany.

At the end of 1911 the plaintiff was surprised to see in a newspaper an announcement that Mr. Hueffer had married a Miss Violet Hunt. She proceeded against that paper, the well-known paper the *Daily Mirror*, and obtained damages and a withdrawal published in the paper, which must have been seen by the defendants. The above-mentioned negotiations broke down,

² See note on page 299.

and shortly afterwards the libel complained of was published.

THE ALLEGED LIBEL

In the *Throne* of April 3, 1912, appeared the following words:— "Messrs. Chatto and Windus have in the press a book which forms an interesting link between the modern school of fiction and that of a generation or so ago in the waning days of the three-volume novel, those good old days as they are now regarded in the book trade, though the three-volume novel, be it remembered, had just as many critics in its own time as the 6s. novel of to-day. The forthcoming book is a romance entitled *The Governess*, by Mrs. Alfred Hunt, one of the popular novelists of the old days, and her daughter, Miss Violet Hunt (now Mrs. Ford Madox Hueffer) one of the successful of the "modern school." Two pictures were published, one of Mrs. and the other of Miss Hunt. Underneath them appeared the words "On the left Mrs. Alfred Hunt, who is joint authoress with her daughter, Miss Violet Hunt (now Mrs. Ford Madox Hueffer) (right), of a forthcoming novel *The Governess*, which links the modern school of fiction with the old three-volume days."

Think (said counsel) of the position in which this placed the plaintiff. Since 1894 she had moved in Society and in literary circles as the wife of Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer. In April 1912 the *Throne* said that somebody else was entitled to that position. People reading it would think that either the plaintiff was not his wife at all or that she was divorced. She, poor lady, who had suffered enough in this world at the hands of

her husband, stood to be persecuted by people announcing to the world in their periodicals that she had no right to the title of Mrs. Hueffer at all. This exposed her to ridicule, hatred, and contempt, in the language of the law, and was a libel. She had to bring this action—no other course was possible. She did not seek extravagant damages, but wished to reinstate herself in the eyes of the world.

When the defendants were written to, their solicitors replied that the portrait was that of a lady known in literary circles as Mrs. Ford Madox Hueffer, and that they could not publish an apology as demanded, as that would expose them to an action for libel by that lady. This was said, although Mr. Hueffer was actually under an order by an English Court of Justice to return to the plaintiff, and to pay her a weekly sum for the support of herself and daughters.

At the conclusion of the counsel's address the Court adjourned.

* * * * *

Mr. Wild then addressed the jury. He asked what people were to do when a woman passed as a man's wife and was widely reputed to be such. What on earth were they to call her? This action ought never to have been brought. It was a fight between two women, and Mrs. Hueffer had succeeded in stamping Miss Hunt, in fact, if not directly, as an adulteress. The *Throne*, with its innocent incidental reference to Miss Hunt as Mrs. Hueffer in the course of a purely literary notice, was a mere catspaw in the game.

Mr. Holman Gregory, in reply, asked what would be the position of Mrs. Hueffer if she allowed the papers to go on publish-

ing photographs of another woman as Mrs. Ford Madox Hueffer and to refer to that other woman as such. Who would she herself be supposed to be, if she did not stop it? Had she not suffered enough in being left to keep and educate two children on £3 a week without being compelled to endure insult as well as injury? As for damages, the plaintiff had no desire to make a profit out of this action, but she did desire to clear her name, and for such substantial damages as would show that they thought she was justified in bringing the action.

Mr. Justice Avory, in summing up, said that the plaintiff claimed that she had been held up to ridicule or contempt, that something had been written of her that would cause her to be shunned in society. The defendants replied that they had said nothing about her at all, but had simply described another woman by a name by which she was known. It was for the jury to say whether people reading the words and knowing the plaintiff and the circumstances of the case would naturally infer that she was a divorced woman. Even if so, it was for them to say whether the inference would be defamatory. She might have been the innocent part claiming the divorce. It was true, as Mr. Wild had urged, that when the defendants were called on by the plaintiff to explain that their statement that Miss Violet Hunt was not Mrs. Hueffer, they were placed on the horns of a dilemma. But that was not the plaintiff's fault. It was also true that since October 1911, Miss Hunt had been passing as Mr. Hueffer's wife and she had acquired a reputation as being his wife; but the question was not what people who saw the portrait and read the words would think

of Miss Hunt, but what they would think of the real Mrs. Hueffer.

On the question of damages he related to the jury the circumstances of the case of Mr. Artemus Jones, and cited from the judgement of the Lord Chancellor in that case ([1910] A.C., 20, at p. 23). If the words were defamatory, the question of intention to defame was irrelevant.

The jury returned a verdict for the plaintiff and assessed the damages at £300, and judgement was entered accordingly, with costs.

Mr. Wild applied for a stay of execution on the ground, *inter alia*, that the words were incapable of a defamatory meaning.

After argument, his Lordship granted a stay on terms that notice of appeal be given and the damages paid into Court within ten days, with the usual undertaking as to costs.

Mr. Storry Deans said, on behalf of a lady whose name had been mentioned on both sides, that she wished him to state that she believed herself to be Mrs. Ford Madox Hueffer and intends so to call herself.

Mr. Justice Avory.—I cannot hear you any further. I cannot hear these *ex parte* statements. I decline to allow this Court to be made a medium of advertisement.

Solicitors—W. Sturges and Co.; Scatliffs.

THE TIMES, February 12th 1925.

AN AUTHOR AND HIS WIFE.

Application to High Court.

Mr. Justice Branson, in the King's Bench Division on Monday, heard a claim by Mrs. Elsie Hueffer, of Appledore, Kent, the wife of Mr. Ford Madox Hueffer, an author,

against Miss Violet Hunt, of 80 Campden Hill Road, W., for damages and an injunction in respect of an alleged libel contained in a letter published in the *Weekly Westminster* on January 19, 1924. The letter complained of was as follows:—

SIR,—May I point out to you an error in your list of Prize Poems, and the names of the volumes whence they are culled. My husband never published a book called *From Ireland and other Poems* with Messrs. Duckworth. It ought to run *From Inland, and other Poems*. The book is now out of print.
—VIOLET HUNT HUEFFER.

The plaintiff alleged that that meant that she had not been married to, or, if married, had been divorced by, M.: Ford Madox Hueffer, and that she had been guilty of a matrimonial offence. The defendant admitted publication, and that the words in their natural and ordinary meaning were defamatory of the plaintiff, but she denied the innuendoes. She disclaimed any intention to repeat the libel, she brought £50 into Court, and submitted to an injunction.

Mr. J. A. Hawke, K.C., who appeared with Mr. S. L. Porter for the plaintiff, said that the plaintiff married Mr. Hueffer in 1894, and they lived together till 1909, when he left her. Since then she had supported the two children of the marriage.¹ Mrs. Hueffer obtained a decree of restitution of conjugal rights, but, as she was a Roman Catholic, she regarded marriage as a bond severable only by death,² and took no steps

¹ See note on page 299.

² This is not a strictly accurate statement. See pages 133, 154 of the book.

for a divorce. Shortly after he left her Mr. Hueffer went to live with Miss Hunt, and, no doubt, many people thought that they were man and wife. Newspapers had published matter referring to Miss Hunt as Mrs. Hueffer, and, in the interests of herself and her children, Mrs. Hueffer felt that she could not pass the matter by. The *Weekly Westminster* had published the letter in all innocence, but Mrs. Hueffer had issued a writ against Miss Hunt, and had obtained an interim injunction, which he now asked should be made perpetual. It was agreed that as Mrs. Hueffer did not desire to make money out of the case, any balance of the £50 paid into Court which might remain after indemnifying her in respect of costs would be returned to the defendant.

Mr. Storry Deans said that, in justice to his client, it must be said that she had not formed a perfectly lawless association with the plaintiff's husband. Mr. Hueffer, who had now adopted another name and lived in another country, had represented that he was a German, and had obtained a divorce in Germany. Miss Hunt now knew that she was not lawfully married to Mr. Hueffer. She had never intended to suggest, nor did she suggest, that Mrs. Hueffer was other than a virtuous woman in every sense.

His Lordship made perpetual an injunction restraining Miss Hunt from describing herself as the wife of Mr. Hueffer, or suggesting that Mrs. Hueffer was not his wife.

THE END

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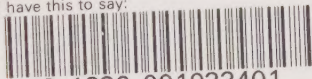
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